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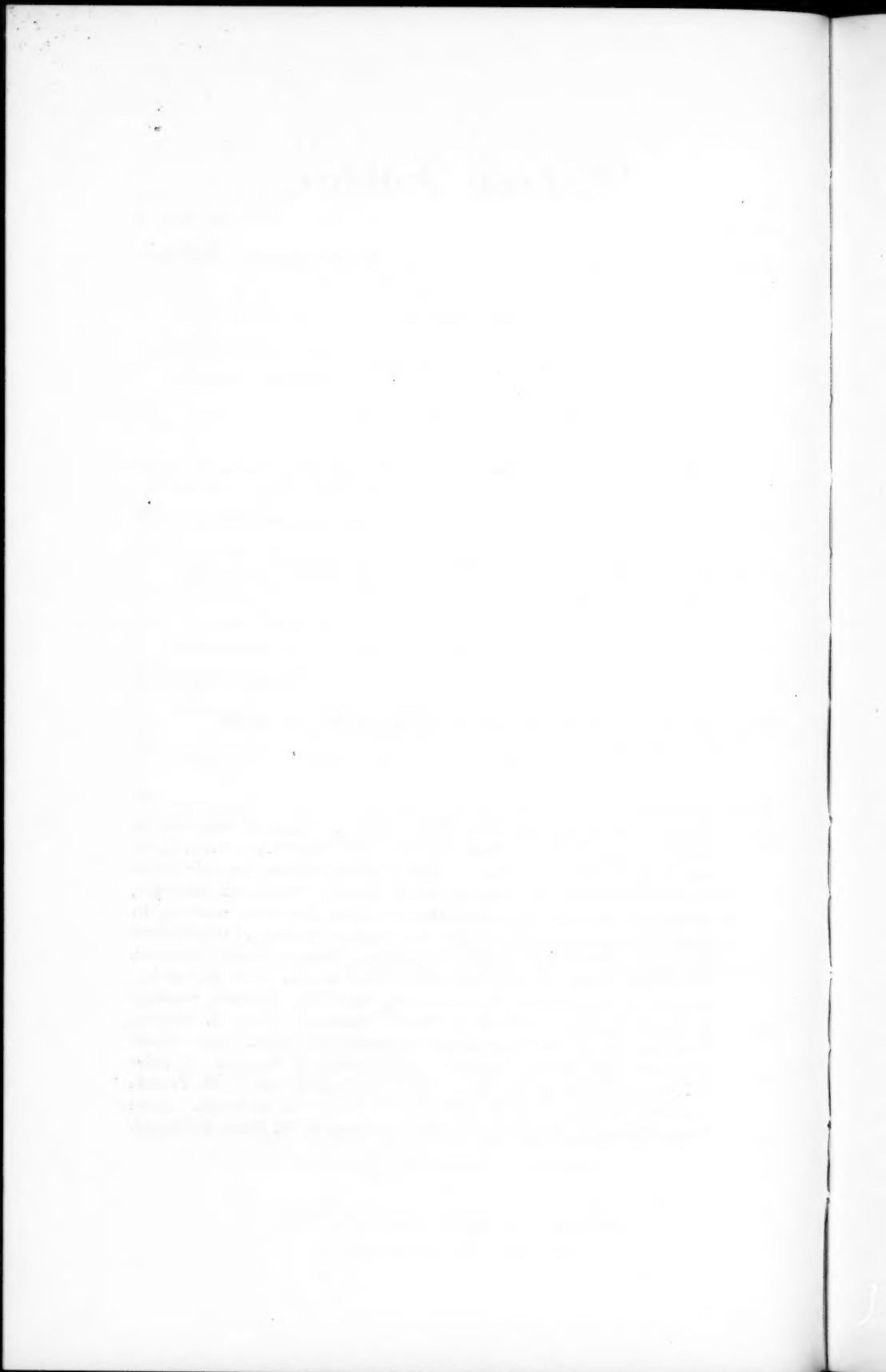
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THE ICELANDIC ÁSU KVAETHI: THE NARRATIVE METAMORPHOSIS OF A FOLKSONG

By HOLGER OLOF NYGARD

When Svend Grundtvig prepared his lengthy and elaborate analysis of *Kvindemorderen* for Volume IV of his *Danmarks gamle Folkeviser*, among the non-Danish variants that he had to hand were a number from Iceland. Different in great degree from the other Scandinavian forms of the ballad, brief, thin in narrative, and unachieved, as the French say, the Icelandic texts were dismissed by Grundtvig with no more than a printing of the ballad in a single composite text. He wrote of the *Ásu kvæthi*, the Icelandic name for the ballad in question, that it was no more than a "Visestump," a truncated and botched rendering of the song to be found in splendid shape in all the other languages of western Europe. Grundtvig did less than full justice to the Icelandic texts of *Kvindemorderen*; his dismissal was in part a judgment of the lack of literary worth of the song; it was such a potpourri, such a jumble of passages from the *Kvindemorderen* song that it commanded no interest for him.¹

In the tradition of the international *Kvindemorderen*, DgF No. 183 (the *Lady Isabel and the Elf-knight* ballad of English-Scottish tradition), the ballad of *Ásu kvæthi* is a peripheral item in the history of the song, peripheral geographically, but, what is more, thematically distant from its parental forms. A study of the nature of the relationships of *Ásu kvæthi* and the larger and more central tradition as we find it in collections from the other Scandinavian countries (as well as the territories adjacent thereto) will reveal to us a specific instance of what has happened to one song in its transmission and preservation in an outlying community. Generalizations about folksong transmission are sufficiently varied, mutually contradictory, and theoretical to justify an interest in specific songs the nature of the transmission of which turns out at times to support no generalized theories but reveals instead what is, after all, salutary, that songs will have their individual histories. This paper is written in an attempt to determine and demonstrate the strange relationship of the Icelandic form of one of the most noted of ballads to its parental forms on the European mainland.

¹ In 1846, in preparing a translation of a selection of English and Scottish ballads set over against related Scandinavian songs, Grundtvig described the Icelandic texts of *Kvindemorderen* as "altfor ufuldstændige til i og for sig at have videre Interesse."

We are instructed by a number of scholars that ballads were not a home grown variety of popular song in Iceland during the Middle Ages, but were in fact imports from other Scandinavian territories, from Denmark according to Finnur Jónsson, and chiefly from Norway according to the late Knut Liestøl. Less than four score ballads have come to light in Iceland, and the greater number of these were recorded fairly early in such commonplace books as the noted Gissur Sveinsson MS. of 1665, in which appears our earliest record of *Ásu kvæði*. The few members of the Danish aristocracy who found themselves in Iceland as resident administrators and officials seem to have cultivated the practice of keeping a commonplace book for such songs as did Danes of similar station in the homeland. That the ballads are imports is clear from the departures they make from traditions of Icelandic metre, alliteration, and rhyme operative in the writing of the indigenous *rimur* and *danzleikr*. Ballads sometimes reveal their entry from elsewhere by their foreign word forms, a characteristic that suggests to Stefán Einarsson their transmission by word of mouth rather than by direct translation.² The importation is further suggested by the subject matter of the Icelandic ballads, most of which have as dramatic backdrop a depiction of the noble and chivalric life of Danish society. In accordance with its subject matter *Ásu kvæði* is classified as one of the *riddara vísur*. Less than half of the Icelandic ballads are in rhymed couplets, the stanzaic form thought by Child and Grundtvig to denote an old ballad; it occasions no surprise that the *Ásu kvæði* is a song in rhymed couplets with the usual arrangement of refrains found among older ballads elsewhere in Scandinavia.

I

Ásu kvæði appears as No. 60 in *Islensk Fornkvæði*, the collection edited by Svend Grundtvig and Jón Sigurthsson.³ The oldest record is from the 1665 MS. of Icelandic ballads; and although the editors do not indicate the dates of the variants, it must be assumed from Grundtvig's remarks in his *DgF* Headnote that the Icelandic texts range from the seventeenth century to the nineteenth. There are twelve recorded variants in all, which have been reduced by the editors to two forms of the ballad, one a short text of eight stanzas representing the older variants A, B, and C; the other a longer text

² "Icelandic Popular Poetry in the Middle Ages," in *Philologica: the Malone Anniversary Studies*, edd. T. A. Kirby and H. B. Woolf (Baltimore, 1949), p. 351.

³ *Islensk Fornkvæði*, Nordiske Oldskrifter udgivne af det nordiske Literatur-Samfund, 2 vols. (København, 1854-85).

substantially the same in the first eight stanzas but with an additional four at the end expanding the narrative and altering the issue of events.

A reading of the variants makes plain that the narrative is a "Visestump," much mangled and abused, with a great deal of the original Scandinavian narrative lost. What is interesting about the Icelandic ballad, a matter Grundtvig did not choose to remark upon, is that nearly every stanza is reminiscent of a stanza from the Scandinavian sister countries in spite of a great alteration of the narrative. It is as if individual strokes have been remembered from the Scandinavian ballad although the outline of the narrative has been forgotten. As a story the Icelandic song is much inferior to the continental analogues. In the early texts the maid appears as no more than a passive victim of the villain, and in the later texts, in which the maid does save herself, she effects her escape simply by asking the villain to wait while she goes into the greenwood, a sortee from which she does not return to him, instead riding home. As Grundtvig points out, the conclusion in which the maid escapes from the villain must be recognized as properly at home in the story.⁴

There follows a printing of the Icelandic text of *Asu kvæthi*, together with a translation and an indication of the variants represented by the different readings. After each stanza are noted the groups of Danish and Norwegian variants that have verbal echoes to the passage in question. The phrasing of the Icelandic texts that bears direct relations with continental variants is italicized. This method of presentation attempts to identify the motifs and variants that might be construed as originals of the Icelandic passages.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. <i>Asa gekk um stræti,</i>
<i>heyrthi hún fögur læti.</i> | <i>Asa went along the road,</i>
<i>she heard a fair song.</i> |
|---|--|

(ABCDEFGHIJKL)

The most remarkable passage in the Icelandic ballad is the first stanza, which is not apparently related to the Danish or Norwegian ballads, or at any rate not to those ballads as we have them. The song that Asa hears can be nothing else than the enticement song sung by Halewijn and Ulinger in analogues from countries south of Denmark. Its presence in Iceland would suggest that in this instance the Icelandic ballad has retained a characteristic which once must have prevailed in the early Danish form of the song but which gave way in continental Scandinavia to two principal (and a greater number of miscellaneous and commonplace) openings, a) the

⁴ *Danmarks gamle Folkeviser* (København, 1853-), IV, 5.

elfland enticement, and b) the opening of *DgF* No. 82, *Ribold og Guldborg*, the abduction motif of which has promoted borrowing from the one ballad to the other. The very fact of the great variety of openings (and in particular commonplace openings) in the Scandinavian tradition of *Kvindemorderen* argues for their being substitutions for an opening that has disappeared.

The presence of the enticement song in the Icelandic ballad suggests that it is derived from the Danish or Norwegian ballad at an early date, a conclusion entirely credible, for the verbal echoes to the Scandinavian ballad that we find in the Icelandic song all derive from passages that are common and undoubtedly original in the Scandinavian song. The initial stanza as the relic of an original Scandinavian reading is entirely in agreement with the contention of the late Knut Liestøl, Stefán Einarsson and others that an Icelandic ballad on occasion represents an older stage of a Scandinavian song. As we shall see, we cannot accept *Ásu kvæthi* as an older form, but we recognize "fögur læti" as an original reading.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 2. Ása gekk í húsith inn,
hún sá þrælinn bundinn. | Asa went into the house,
There she saw the villain bound. |
|--|--|

(ABCDGFIJL)

... í lundinn ... hún fann (B)	... into the greenwood ... she found
... um grundu (G)	... over the fields
... mann ein bundinn (DFGIJL)	... a man bound

The B text alone preserves the locale of the action of the story that we find in the rest of the tradition of the song in Europe, that locale being the greenwood.

In the continental variants, rather than finding the villain bound the heroine binds him, but this towards the end of the narrative after she has managed to dupe him. The relationship here between the two bodies of texts, Icelandic and continental Scandinavian, is verbal rather than thematic or narrative, a kind of relationship we shall see occurring again.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 3. "Ása litla, leystu mig!
eg skal ekki svikja þig." | "Little Asa, loose me,
I shall not deceive you." |
|---|---|

(A G)

"Vel þú komin, Ása mey! þú munt ætla ath leysa mig."	"Welcome, my Asa, You must intend to loose me."
---	--

(B)

"Heil og sæl, Ása mín! nú ertu komin ath leysa mig."	"Greetings, my Asa, you have come to loose me."
---	--

(DGIJKL)

Two of the older texts retain the villain's request that he be released from his bonds, but in addition to that the promise that he will not deceive the maid. Verse 3 b is to be found in all Danish variants of the ballad and in one group of Norwegian variants which we shall here call Group II (a group derived from Group I). In the continental narrative the request to be released occurs very near the end of the narrative, after the maid's life has been threatened and after she has turned the tables on the villain by a ruse. In the Icelandic song the request is the villain's opening gesture, which promises to lead to a story.

4. "Eg þori ekki ath leysa þig,
eg veit ei, nema þú svíkir mig."

"I dare not loose you,
I know not but what you will
deceive me."

(ABCDGFIJKL)

The maid's response is very much what we might expect in the Icelandic song. Yet the corresponding passage in Danish and Norwegian occurs much earlier in the narrative; verse 4 b in the Danish and Norwegian ballad is not spoken by the maid but is the villain's wary reply to her when she proposes to do him the service of delousing him, an action by which she means to put him into a runesleep. The phrasing of the original has been retained but put to a different narrative use.

- after 4. Ása tók ath kalla hátt,
þá kom hennar fathirinn brátt.

Asa proceeded to call loudly,
Then came her father hastily.

(L)

This unique stanza, which concludes the L variant (only four stanzas long), suggested to Grundtvig a possible connection with the German variants in which the maid, permitted three cries by the villain, is saved by her brother to whom she calls.⁵ The possibility of such a connection seems, however, very remote, for the "three cries" form of the German ballad is from South Germany and is clearly a derivative of the fuller Plattdeutsch ballad in which the maid appears heroic, managing her own rescue. The stanza above appears to be an easy if not very satisfactory solution for the dilemma presented in a truncated variant as short as L is. The passage is a fabrication of a later day (L is a nineteenth century text), for in no Scandinavian texts from the continent does the maid call for help or receive any.

5. "Viti þath kóngr Inn ríki,
hvorki annath svíki."

"So help me the King in Heaven,
no one shall deceive the other."

(ABCDFIJK)

⁵ See the notes for No. 60 in *Islensk Fornkvæði*.

Only the Danish ballad provides a corresponding stanza for the above passage, and in a limited number of variants that form a Danish sub-group (the passage occurs twice in one of these). A single Norwegian variant which differs from its fellows in its indebtedness to the Danish sub-group also has the stanza.

In the Icelandic ballad it is the villain who swears by God that there will be no deception; in the Danish it is the maid, who is attempting to allay the villain's apprehension prior to her working her ruse.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 6. <i>Leysti hún bönd af hans hönd,
og svo fjötur af hans fót.</i> | She loosed the bonds from his hands,
And the fetters from his feet. |
|--|--|

(ABCDEFIJK)

Once again the Danish ballad provides phrasing that suggests stanza 6; the Norwegian ballad is less clearly suggested. In the continental variants the maid ties the villain hand and foot after her ruse has been successful; in the Icelandic song the narrative necessitates her unbinding him. In some Danish variants, it is true, the maid first unbinds a neckband or goldband (in one instance *his* neckband) in order that she have the wherewithal to tie him up. In Danish variant A we find additional phrasing that is suggestive of stanza 6: *Saa löste hun hest aff fieeder, / Hun spentte denom om Vlffers feeder* (She then loosed the horse from its fetter, / Which she fastened about Ulver's feet). Verbal similarities there are, but the common phrasing is put to very different narrative uses in the two bodies of texts.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 7. <i>"Niu hef eg farith lönd,
tíu hef eg svikith sprund.</i> | "Nine lands have I fared to,
Ten maids have I deceived. |
| 8. <i>Nu ertu hin ellefte,
þér skal eg alrei sleppa."</i> | You are now the eleventh,
I shall never let you slip." |

(ABCDEFIJK)

The series of numbers—nine, ten, eleven—is again drawn from the continental narrative, except that the incremental series has been added to. In all the Danish groups of variants, as well as in Group I of the Norwegian ballad, the formula appears much as in English: "Seven king's-daughters here hae I slain, / And ye shall be the eight o them." In the Icelandic ballad the villain refers to his travels in nine lands. The Danish A variant again provides a verbal echo: *"Otte iumfruier saa war der inde, / Thi fierst, ieg kunde y landenn finde"* ("Eight maids were there [in the place of destruction], the fairest I could find in the lands [i.e., in different lands]). The

verb *svike* (deceive, beguile), a repetition from earlier stanzas, has replaced the more forceful and dire announcement of the villain in Danish and Norwegian that he has killed the others.

- after 8. *Hun lét binda hans hönd og fót,* She bound his hands and feet,
 einnig fjötur á hans fót. Also fetters about his feet.

(K)

The above final stanza from K is stanza 6, with "bind" in place of "loose," bringing it into more precise conformity with the continental parallels. As narrative in the Icelandic text it violates probability. The stanza is once again a weak effort to close the story, this time with a motif ready made a few stanzas earlier. The stanza cannot be construed as a retention of the continental narrative (in which the maid does bind him), for in K as elsewhere the story opens with him bound.

9. *"Bíthtu mín svo litla stund,* "Wait for me a little while,
 methan eg geng í grænan While I go into the greenwood."
 lund!"
10. *Hann beith hennar langa* He waited for her a long time,
 stund, But she never came into his grasp.
 en aldrei kom hún á hans
 fund.

(DEFIJ)

Stanzas 9 and 10, which constitute the maid's ruse in the Icelandic ballad, have no narrative counterpart in the continental ballad save the fact that the maid there too executes a ruse to free herself. But in Danish and Norwegian the ruse precedes the binding; in Icelandic a piteously weak ruse follows the act of unbinding. The very striking verbal retentions are the rhymed phrases "*litla stund—í grænan lund,*" which appear in nearly all Danish and Norwegian variants, but not at the close of the narrative as here, but near the beginning. In the continental ballad, after the pair reach the greenwood (*grænan lund*), they decide to rest for a while (*stund*). Thereafter follows the significant part of the narrative.

11. *Ása tók sinn hvíta hest,* Asa mounted her white horse,
 allra kvenna reith hún mest. Of all women she rode most.

(D)

The above stanza has its counterpart in both Danish and Norwegian at the close of the story; since it is a Scandinavian ballad commonplace its reappearance in one Icelandic variant need occasion

no particular wonder. Where the horse has come from is, however, not explained.

12. Ása gekk í helgan stein, Ása entered a cloister,
aldrei gerthi hún manni mein. She never harmed any man.

(I)

This stanza has no parallel in the Danish or Norwegian variants; it probably entered *Ásu kvæthi* from another ballad, *Bóthildar kvæthi* (No. 65), in which it is germane to the narrative. Ása has little reason for entering a cloister. The stanza is a commonplace and its presence in a variant of *Ásu kvæthi* is probably explained thereby.

II

From what body of variants was the Icelandic ballad drawn? It has already been suggested that the Norwegian variants form two groups of related texts, the second of which is derived from the first. The first is more closely related to the Danish texts and partakes of those phrasings and motifs that we might consider pan-Scandinavian. The Danish variants divide into three readily recognizable groups: Group I, the A—D texts, drawn from early aristocratic commonplace books; Group II, also old as regards both records and thematic content, and transmitted in great part as broadsides; and Group III, the traditional texts from Vestjylland collected during the last hundred years. From the comments accompanying the stanzas above it is at once seen that the progenitors of the Icelandic ballad are not in Group III of the Danish ballad, nor in Group II of the Norwegian, for in both languages it is the older forms that consistently exhibit the related passages. Ascertaining the precise parent Group is made difficult by the circumstance that the passages we have specified as verbal retentions in the Icelandic ballad are prominent phrasings in the continental Scandinavian ballad and so appear in nearly all the groups in question. But stanzas 4, 5, and 6 do strongly suggest that the Danish ballad, and more precisely Group II of the Danish variants, is the progenitor of the Icelandic song. For the phrasing in Group II is in most instances closer to the words of the *Ásu kvæthi* than is that of Group I, a fact which only extended and comparative quotation will reveal. That the Icelandic ballad is Danish in origin is in part borne out by the refrain of the oldest texts, *fögrum tjöldum slogu þeir undir Sámsey*, which mentions the Danish island of Samsö, from which derive incidentally three of the texts of Danish Group II.

There follows a table which presents in brief the above analysis

of verbal correspondences between the Icelandic ballad on the one hand and the groups of Danish and Norwegian⁶ variants on the other.

Icelandic stanzas		Danish Groups		Norwegian Groups	
st. 1		<hr/>		<hr/>	
st. 2	I	II	III	I	II
st. 3 a		II(EFGH)		I(IJNR)	
b	I	II	III	I(R)	II
st. 4 a		II(H)		I	II
		II(EFGHM)	III(K)	I(R)	
b		II(EFGHM)	III(K)	I(GQR)	II
st. 5		II(H)		I(R)	
		II(EFGHM)	III(K)		
st. 6 a	I	II	III	<hr/>	
b	I	II	III	I	II
st. 7	I	II		I	
st. 8	I	II	III	I	
st. 9	I	II		I	II
st. 10		<hr/>		<hr/>	
st. 11 a	I(AC)	II(EF)		I	II
b		II		I	II
st. 12		<hr/>		<hr/>	

It will be noted that the only Group of variants that constantly appears when verbal retentions are present in the Icelandic ballad is Danish Group II. Although the records of Group II are no older than the eighteenth century they are as 'original' in content as the Group I variants from the aristocratic collections, one of which dates from c.1550. Group II texts show more clearly the kinship between the Dutch-German and Danish variants than do the Group I texts. The Group II texts are, from *DgF*, No. 183 E, F, and G, and from H. Gruner Nielsen's "Tillæg" for *DgF* No. 183 (to be found in the *Dansk Folkemindesamling* in Copenhagen), H, L, M, and N.

III

Although our interest has been to consider the verbal correspondences that exist between the continental ballad and the Icelandic

⁶ The Norwegian variants, to be found in MS form at the Norsk Folkemindesamling in Oslo, bear the letter designations given them by the late Knut Liestøl.

derivative, there is, of course, a thematic kinship between the two that is revealed by the common phrasing. But the remarkable characteristic about *Ásu kvæthi* is that the verbal correspondences should be there at all, considering the great differences between the two narratives, particularly in the confused sequence in the Icelandic song of the motifs drawn from the earlier narrative. Asa, in passing along the way, hears a fetching song, and in looking into the house (the grove of B is more in keeping with the other forms of the ballad) she sees a scoundrel bound. He asks to be untied, and assures Asa that he will not harm her. Asa replies that she dare not loose him, for he might deceive her, but he swears by the heavenly King that there will be no deception. After she has loosened the bonds from his hands and feet she is informed that he has travelled in nine lands, has deceived ten maids, and will make her the eleventh. Here end A, B, and C, the oldest variants. Five of the remaining variants provide her with a simple ruse, her request that he wait briefly while she goes into the greenwood. She rides off safely and he is left waiting.

As the notations of Danish and Norwegian parallels indicate, the song is a scrambling of a few motifs. We recognize as belonging to the Danish *Kvindemorderen* the concern over possible deception; the swearing by God that no deception will be practiced; the stanza with the rhyme pair "stund—lund"; the threat—"ten maids, you shall be the eleventh"; the binding of hands and feet; the request to be released; the maid's riding off safely. But these things are given a curious order; since he is bound (inexplicably) at the start of the song, she must release him if we are to have a narrative. To remove herself from danger she gets the permission of the villain to momentarily go into the greenwood; the Danish narrative begins with the pair riding off into the greenwood. First things are last, and last things first. The result to the story is that the heroine no longer appears heroic. The narrative is no longer a study of the tables turned; instead we are told merely of a narrow escape.

Although the narrative structure of the Icelandic ballad is so very different from that of the other Scandinavian forms, nevertheless the verbal echoes are sufficiently strong to make us realize that we are dealing with the same substance that we find on the continent. These verbal echoes suggest a curious course of transmission of *Ásu kvæthi*; they suggest that the ballad was pieced together from remembrance, not of the story as a whole, but of stanzas, phrases, and words. The verbal similarities are close at certain points. On three separate occasions in the Danish ballad the word "svike" occurs;

there is little wonder then, since the Icelandic song is an apparent attempt at recollection of the original song, that the word should appear as many as four times in *Asu kvæthi* in spite of the brevity of the piece. The incremental enumeration (ten maids, you shall be the eleventh) is here given another increment—"nine lands," as if in an attempt to make more of what little was recalled of the original. Can this last be a recollection of "land" in Danish B, F, and H? "*Will I drage aff landet med mig?*" (Will you leave the country with me?"). Or of the Swedish "*man ifraan fremmande land*" (man from a foreign land)? The shortness of the piece rules out the possibility that the many verbal correspondences that we have noted have come about fortuitously. They are clearly the pieces that are left from the total verbal structure of the earlier form of the song. The presence of these verbal parallels without a commensurate parallelism of the stories attests to the peculiar nature of orally transmitted verse, in which such formal considerations as verse length and rhyme impress the mind with particularities of phrasing more so than with the narrative structure and its management. The total body of variants of any folksong in languages not overly disparate from one another reveals usually a conformity of narrative which is achieved by the retention from variant to variant of crucial phrases, verses, rhymes and other formal characteristics that are verbal in nature; the total verbal structure of a folksong will tend to maintain itself, will be maintained by folksingers transmitting a song that they have put to memory. *Asu kvæthi*, rather than preserving the narrative, which has clearly undergone a serious twist and turnabout, retains merely a few thematic correspondences, and primarily because in the attempt to reproduce the song, the Icелander, whose memory clearly flagged, could muster only a few verbal echoes of the original Danish. The result is a new narrative with suggestions of relationship that emerge from the phrasing.

In that reconstruction, the fact of the villain being bound was a primary recollection, as well as the concern over deception (whether it be his or hers the singer has forgotten). To make a story the villain must be unbound. The threat follows, a stanza that is remarkably constant in the entire tradition of this ballad. The theme of the ruse is then added to provide the maid with a means of escape. All in all, in spite of its shortcomings *Asu kvæthi* is an interesting instance of ballad transmission; a new narrative has been fashioned with a few of the verbal counters that the older tradition provided.

FOLKLORE NOTES AND NEWS

MIDWEST FOLKLORE. It is gratifying to note that the reduced price for back issues of *Midwest Folklore* that was listed in *MF*, IV:2 brought so great a response that the offer had to be canceled on October 15, 1955. Our back issue supply is now barely sufficient to meet our own needs!

The Business Manager has asked us to announce that *Midwest Folklore* does not publish annual indices. We should like to do so, but our budget and low subscription price is such that it cannot bear the added burden of an additional printing cost. An index of the material which has appeared in the first five volumes is, however, planned for the Spring issue, 1956 (VI:1).

SOCIETY FOR ETHNO-MUSICOLOGY. At the meeting of the American Anthropological Association held in Boston on November 17-19 a group of anthropologists, folklorists, and musicians met to organize a Society for Ethno-Musicology. The purpose of the organization is to encourage studies in the field of ethnic music and to provide meetings and communication for those interested in this field. The organization will undertake responsibility for *Ethno-Musicology*, a newsletter which has been circulated internationally for the last two years. Officers for the first year are: President—Willard Rhodes, Professor of Music, Columbia University; Vice-President—Mieczyslaw Kolinsky, New York City; Secretary-Treasurer—David P. McAllester, Associate Professor of Anthropology, Wesleyan University; Editor—Alan P. Merriam, Assistant Professor of Anthropology, University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee.

FOLKLORE PUBLICATIONS. Professor Wm. Hugh Jansen sends us the following note which should be of interest to all folklorists, particularly to those who have been following our international series with interest. "A number of the foreign embassies in Washington, usually through their press, educational, or cultural officer, have available (usually free), pamphlets, periodicals, and sometimes books, in which folklore plays some part. For instance, frequently in less difficult languages than the original and equally frequently in a scholarly manner, *The Korean Pacific Press*, 1828 Jefferson Place N.W., Washington 6, D.C. has a monthly *Korean Survey* which usually contains some folklore and *An Introduction to Korea*, a pamphlet with a lot of folklore. Professor George K. Brady calls attention to *Mainichi*, the English language newspaper of Kyoto, Japan, which has a folktale in almost every issue (this may be subscribed to through I. and I. D. Perkins,

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A GLIMPSE AT THE HISTORY OF FOLKLORE IN ITALY

By SALVATORE NANIA

Before Mr. Thoms proposed the fortunate term of "folklore" to indicate the "popular antiquities," and even before the Grimm brothers had gathered together the "*Kinder und Hausmärchen*" there was in Italy a remarkable interest in research about popular traditions. Our forerunners were many indeed, but three of them represent the principal directions: the Venetian Leonardo Giustiniani, the Neapolitan G. B. Basile, and the Calabrensis Tommaso Campanella. To the first we owe the interest showed among us for the first time in the study of folk-songs; to the second the explanation in vernacular form of folk-tales; and to the third the attention paid to vulgar beliefs and magic.

After these three pioneers that represent three special branches in the study of folklore, a multitude of amateurs, promoters, and students of popular traditions rose in the following centuries with the purpose of knowing and making known the grandiose traditional patrimony of the Italian people: from the proverbs to songs, from fables to tales, from customs to ceremonies, all that constitutes the greatest part of our literary, civil, religious and moral history.

In Italy, the first student that saw in the popular traditions the reflection of past and present civilizations is G. B. Vico, the great Neapolitan philosopher, who in his "*Scienza Nuova*" says: "Le tradizioni volgari debbono avere avuto pubblici motivi di vero, onde nacquero e si conservano da intieri popoli per lunghi spazi di tempo."¹ Through the reading of his work we may observe that he was one of the first students who adopted the "comparative method" in investigating the popular traditions.

Another great precursor of the studies on folklore was Ludovico Antonio Muratori, who with his "*Antiquitates Medii Aevi*" gave a very remarkable contribution to the knowledge of customs, traditions, shows, plays, etc., of the Middle Ages. His work represents even now an example of criticism and arrangement in popular traditions. G. B. Vico and L. A. Muratori are, therefore, the most authoritative students among those who looked at the folk traditions with a scientific eye, not for mere curiosity or for the pleasure of collecting them.

¹ "The vulgar traditions must have had public reasons of truth, for which they are born and conserved by whole peoples for long periods of time."

Gradually, the complex of folk traditions was subdivided into many sections and in Italy students began to appear who investigated many special branches of folklore. In 1750 Michelangelo Carmeli published his "*Storia di vari costumi sacri e profani degli antichi fino a noi pervenuti*"², and, for the first time the problem of worship among folk was faced. Though this work is not entirely convincing from the scientific point of view, it is, however, to be considered as the first step toward the researches on animism. As regards the study on magic and sorcery, we find the Neapolitan Nicola Valletta who showed a strong interest in the "jettatura" (ill-luck). He published in 1777 "*La Cicalata sul Fascino*" whereby he tries to explain the difference between the "malocchio" (evil eye) and the "jettatura" on the basis of his own experience, but, of course, his conclusions are not appreciable. However, his book attracted the attention of other students who, later on, treated the same topic from an objective point of view with a much better result. A very original work on this argument was offered by Leonardo Marugi in 1788 with his "*Capricci sulla jettatura*".³

At this time in Italy there was a strong tendency towards researches in folklore, and we may say that in the learned circles there was no student (man of letters, poet, philologist, geographer, historian, etc.) who did not feel the necessity of offering his contribution to the studies on folklore. It is the time when even the famous great poet and philologist Giacomo Leopardi wrote an essay against the "folk errors of ancient peoples" which he considered bad especially for the "spiriti un poco deboli"⁴. It is superfluous to remember that Giacomo Leopardi does not pretend to investigate into the origin of said errors, but only to take them away from the popular belief.

The section of folklore which deals with peasant life is treated for the first time by Michele Placucci, who published in 1818 a remarkable essay "*Usi e costumi dei contadini di Romagna*"⁵. This essay of a clear and organic nature, though it was far from being comparable with the works and collections which were to appear later on, was of considerable utility and served above all to clarify the meaning of the other one written by Giovanni Battara and published a little earlier under the title of "*Pratica agraria distribuita in*

² History of various Christian and profane customs of the ancient peoples lasting till now.

³ Caprices on the ill-luck. This work is divided into fourteen "caprices" seven in prose and seven in verses.

⁴ "spirits rather weak"

⁵ Traditions and customs of the peasants of Romagna (Northern Italy).

vari dialoghi".⁶ Michele Placucci reached fame and popularity and later G. Pitrè considered him as a true precursor of modern collectors of folklore.

With Niccolò Tommaseo the study of popular traditions entered into a new phase; the collections of folk-songs appeared more frequently and they were accepted by the learned people together with the official literature. Niccolò Tommaseo's collection "*Canti popolari toscani*" attracted the attention of all students and men of letters, and because of the fame of the author's name it was taken as a pattern by all students of folklore. Among them we remember the Sicilian Lionardo Vigo, who published in 1857 a collection of Sicilian songs that became famous and deserved the praise of Niccolò Tommaseo himself. Later on G. Pitrè, who considered Vigo's collection as a monument of language, history, and country-love, made the following statement: "Qui in Sicilia primo a dare una collezione di canti popolari fu Lionardo Vigo. Grande la ricchezza del suo volume, sconfinata l'erudizione del discorso proemiale".⁷

The work of Tommaseo goes on calling the attention of the students and in many provinces of Italy new collectors come out. In 1871 Renato Imbriani gave out his collection "*Canti popolari delle provincie meridionali*",⁸ while the learned Jesuit Antonio Bresciani, following the direction of Vigo published an original essay entitled "*Costumi della Sardegna*"⁹. Almost in the meantime appeared two other collections of great value: "*Storia della poesia popolare*",¹⁰ by Ermolao Rubini, and "*Canti popolari piemontesi*" by Costantino Nigra.

At that time the study of folklore in Italy was well developed and the scientific investigations surpassed the national boundaries and penetrated into the most important European schools, in order to compare the Italian studies with those of foreign countries. The books published abroad were continuously consulted and the various methods analyzed and adopted.

Alessandro D'Ancona with his studies on popular poetry enlightened the field of researches with a new light and clarified some notions pertaining to the folk poetry that till that time were rather

⁶ "Agrarian practice distributed into various dialogues".

⁷ "Here in Sicily the first to give a collection of folk-songs was Lionardo Vigo. The riches of his volume (was) great, the erudition of his introductory address (was) boundless".

⁸ Popular songs of the southern provinces.

⁹ Traditions of Sardinia.

¹⁰ History of the popular poetry.

dark and equivocal. For the elaboration of his work he owes much to the collaboration of Domenico Comparetti, author of an interesting book published in 1867 "Edipo e la mitologia comparata".¹¹

Because the field of scientific investigations had been enlarged, the influence of foreign studies in folklore was felt more and more strongly in Italian research. In 1875 Angelo De Gubernatis, following the theories of Max Müller, published a brilliant essay "Max Müller e la mitologia comparata"¹². Very remarkable is also the influence of philological studies. The great masterpieces of the Italian literature became the object of analyzing for the philologists, who aimed at explaining the motives that determined the episodes characterizing them.

Pio Reina investigated the masterpiece of Ariosto and, in 1876, presented his "Le fonti dell'Orlando furioso".¹³ Later on he published another interesting work on "I Reali di Francia".¹⁴ The field of demonology was cultivated by Arturo Graf, author of many books and a very active collector even if not always precise. His "Tramonto delle leggende" synthesizes his great activity in folk-literature.

In Sicily, Salvatore Salomone Marino continued the tradition started by Vigo. His collections and essays on the "Storia dei canti popolari siciliani"—1868—¹⁵ are remarkable indeed and his name is bound with Pitre for both were the founders of the "Archivio per lo studio delle tradizioni popolari".¹⁶

The highest point of the preparatory phase of folklore studies in Italy is characterized by the works of Alessandro d'Ancona, Angelo De Gubernatis, and Giuseppe Pitre. To the first we owe the constitution of folk-literature in a critical and historical form; to the second the constitution of folk-mythology which represents the primordial "logos" of our people; and to the third the general investigation of folk-life that served to build up the foundations of the Italian demopsychology.

When G. Pitre inaugurated his teaching at the University of Palermo, on the 12th of January, 1911, he began by pronouncing the following words: "Per noi la demopsicologia studia la vita morale e materiale dei popoli, documentata da diversi generi di tradizioni, orali ed oggettive. Fiabe e favole, racconti e leggende, proverbi e motti, canti e melodie, enigmi e indovinelli, giochi e passatempi,

¹¹ AEdipus and the compared mythology.

¹² Max Müller and the compared mythology.

¹³ The sources of the "Orlando furioso"

¹⁴ The Royalties of France

¹⁵ History in the Sicilian folksongs

¹⁶ Archives for the study of popular traditions

giocattoli e balocchi, spettacoli e feste, usi e costumi, riti e cerimonie, pratiche, credenze, superstizioni, ubbie, tutto un mondo palese e occulto, di realtà e di immaginazione, si muove, si agita, sorride, geme a chi sa accorstarvisi e comprenderlo".¹⁷

These words contain the scientific testament of Pitрэ and explain the reasons that encouraged him in collecting in the "Biblioteca delle Tradizioni Popolari Siciliane"¹⁸, in the "Archivio delle Tradizioni Popolari"¹⁹, in the "Museo Etnografico Siciliano"²⁰, and in the "Bibliografia delle Tradizioni Popolari in Italia"²¹, all the elements, general and particular, necessary to the reconstruction of the great complex of national traditions. This is the reason that when we say Pitрэ we indicate the greatest name in the history of Italian folklore. With his genius and his extraordinary activity he deserves a preeminent place in all branches of Italian folklore.

Many students collaborated with Pitрэ, D'Ancona, and De Gubernatis in collecting and analyzing folk materials. Among them we must remember E. Rubieri, V. Imbriani, G. Carducci, Severino Ferrari, Francesco Novati, F. Torraca, S. Prato, and the great Neapolitan philosopher Benedetto Croce.

Since the death of Pitрэ the figure that dominates the field of folklore in Italy is that of Raffaele Corso, professor of ethnography at the Istituto Universitario Orientale of Naples. With R. Corso, whom Pitрэ indicated as his deserving successor to the professorship of demopsychology at the Palermo University, the study of popular traditions got wider and deeper, and summed up in that new scientific discipline that was to impose itself in the academic world under the name of "ethnography."

As a matter of fact, the teaching of ethnography started by R. Corso in 1914 at Rome University was the first one till then in Italy. The activity of this eminent Italian student is really amazing and it would be rather tiresome to quote all his works here. Therefore we mention only the most significant steps of his scientific career. He gave a great effort to creating the Museum of Florence

¹⁷ For us demopsychology studies the moral and material life of the peoples, documented by several kinds of traditions oral and objective. Fables and fairy tales, tales and legends, proverbs and mottoes, songs and melodies, enigma and riddles, plays and pastimes, toys and playthings, shows and feasts, customs and traditions, rites and ceremonies, practices, beliefs, superstitions, fads, a whole world visible and invisible of reality and of imagination moves, stirs, smiles, moans to whom knows how to approach and understand it".

¹⁸ Library of Sicilian Popular Traditions.

¹⁹ Archives of Popular Traditions.

²⁰ Sicilian Ethnographical Museum.

²¹ Bibliography of Popular Traditions in Italy.

together with L. Loria; he arranged the ethnographic collections of Villa d'Este at Tivoli; in Collaboration with Gabriele D'Annunzio he published a collection on the "Arte Popolare Italiana"; he founded a rubric of ethnography and folklore in the review "Bilychnis" of Rome; in 1922 he was invited "with priority" to all other participants to the teaching of ethnography at the Instituto Universitario Orientale of Naples; in 1923 he gave out his book "Folklore" which serves till now as a guide to all students of folk traditions and marks the beginning of that prodigious activity that made him deserve the praise of the academic world and placed the Italian school among the most advanced schools of ethnography. He has directed since 1925 the review "Folklore" which was first called "Folklore Italiano".

We that have had him as our "Magister" and that have never missed a single lesson of his university teaching, even when it meant to stand up amidst the crowd of students for all the time of the lesson, cannot but recognize in Raffaele Corso the "father" of the ethnographic studies in Italy.

Thanks to him nowadays in Italy there is a large number of students of ethnography and folklore, such as Cocchiara (Palermo University), Fumagalli (Torino Un.), La Sorsa (Bari Un.), Naselli (Catania Un.), Nice Bruno (Florence Un.), Lombardi Satriani Raffaele, Onciulescu (Naples Un.), and many others who gathered together at the "Congresso di Studi Etnografici Italiani," held in Naples in 1952, with a common wish of contributing to the Congress and of rendering a sincere homage to the "Maestro" of ethnography in Italy, Raffaello Corso, President of said Congress.

Naples, Sept. 1954.

FOLKLORE IN THE STORIES OF JAMES HALL

By JOHN T. FLANAGAN

When James Hall descended the Ohio River on a keelboat in the spring of 1820, he was embarking on a new career. He had already seen military service in the War of 1812, and he retained his commission as a lieutenant of artillery long after the termination of the war. Later he studied law and was admitted to the bar at Pittsburgh. But although a Pennsylvanian by birth, Hall had no wish to remain in the Keystone State; the west lured him not only as a new and challenging domicile but also as a place where adventure beckoned. In the preface to his revised *Legends of the West* Hall admitted that the excitement of the wilderness was at least as important a motivation as the chance for professional advancement: "The legends of the West, scattered in fragments over the land, were more alluring than imaginary clients or prospective fees."¹ And in another preface he remarked that he had spent little time on his sketches of the border country: "they are plain recitals of the traditions collected by other travellers upon our border, or of the legends which have amused his own hours while sitting by the hospitable fireside of the western farmer."² In the course of time Hall became a successful western lawyer, as well as state's attorney, circuit judge, and treasurer of Illinois, but he never lost his original interest in the traditions of the people.

Hall spent twelve years in Illinois, eventually returning to Cincinnati where he devoted himself to banking. During these years he edited an annual, a literary monthly magazine, and two newspapers.³ He also wrote one novel, *Harpe's Head*, and about fifty tales, not to mention a small amount of verse and a good deal of expository prose about the western country. He became one of the most intelligent and vocal of spokesmen for the trans-Allegheny country and revealed an interest in the history, settlement, government, geography, topography, and culture of the region. But most of all he concerned himself with the people of the Ohio Valley states, and it was this strong interest which led him into the study and artistic use of folk themes.

Hall was neither a collector nor a transcriber. Unlike Henry Rowe Schoolcraft or James Athearn Jones he made no attempt to preserve Indian tales in their original version, and he was not

¹ James Hall, *Legends of the West*, Author's Revised Edition (New York, 1853), ix.

² James Hall, *Tales of the Border* (Philadelphia, 1835), 11.

³ The only biography is John T. Flanagan, *James Hall, Literary Pioneer of the Ohio Valley* (Minneapolis, 1941).

especially interested in aboriginal mythology for its own sake.⁴ But tradition, legend, or witchcraft fascinated him and provided him themes for stories. Not long after Washington Irving had discovered the lore of the Hudson Valley, James Hall fell upon tales of the Illinois country. By 1835 he had published three volumes of short stories, many of which had previously appeared in periodicals or annuals such as the *Illinois Monthly Magazine*, the *Token*, and the *Western Souvenir*. Not all of these stories are folk tales and not all of them even contain folk elements. But folklore is strong enough in a few to warrant the assertion that James Hall was one of the earliest American writers of fiction, and certainly the first western romancer, to use folk materials creatively. Moreover, his stories were artistically successful and are frequently included in anthologies of American literature. A few merit examination.

An early western writer would naturally come in contact with Indian material. Hall had no personal dealing with the aborigines beyond meeting the stray Indians who lingered behind the frontier in the southern half of Illinois before the Black Hawk War. But he had heard the stories told by travelers and explorers, and he knew the books of such chroniclers as Pike, Long, Lewis and Clark. From such sources he drew several tales.

"The Black Steed of the Prairies" deals with a feud between Flathead and Blackfoot Indians. The Blackfeet band were the owners of a fabulous animal, "a remarkably fleet, strong and beautiful horse, of a deep sable, without spot or blemish." The Black Steed had been captured on the open prairies where he had originally been the leader of a herd of wild horses, and he was much valued by his Indian owner.⁵ But a Flathead youth, determined to prove his manhood, had stolen the wild steed. Later in the tale the horse was recaptured by the Blackfeet and then sacrificed at the grave of the chief who once rode him to insure that no other rider would ever possess him. Hall observed in a footnote to his story that the legend of the super-horse, roaming the western plains at the head of a herd of mustangs and remarkable for his size, speed, and intelligence, was a common one but that tradition usually made the animal white

⁴ Cf. Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, *Algonic Researches* (New York, 1839); James Athearn Jones, *Traditions of the North American Indians* (London, 1830).

⁵ The tradition of a wild steed, fabulously cunning and powerful, and usually white in color, was disseminated throughout the western country. Herman Melville refers to it in chapter xlii of *Moby-Dick*, 1851, and J. Frank Dobie has some interesting variants in chapter ix of *The Mustangs* (Boston, 1952). Cf. Melville's words about the white steed of the prairies: "a magnificent milk-white charger, large-eyed, small-headed, bluff-chested, and with the dignity of a thousand monarchs in his lofty, overscorning carriage."

in hue. He claimed that he told the tale as he had heard it; "but as others may have used the same tale, and we have no ambition to acquire fame as a taker of other men's horses, we have made ours a horse of a different colour."⁶ His pun emphasizes a loose use of a folk theme.

In two other stories Hall employed Indian traditions without particular skill. "The New Moon" deals with the daughter of Chief Blackbird of the Omaha tribe, who formed a relationship with a white trader and genuinely loved him. But the trader Bolingbroke became rapacious and neglectful, eventually deserting the New Moon for a white woman whom he legally married. The Indian girl, now the mother of two children, retained her loyalty to the trader and warned him of a plot against his life, but would no longer associate with him. According to Indian tradition she went into virtual retirement and reared her children as enemies of the white race.

In "The Dark Maid of Illinois" Hall told the story of a Parisian barber Pierre Blondo, who accompanied a French expedition into the Illinois country. His desire to see the new world was whetted by fascinating stories of gold mines with fabulous riches and of a pool which had the miraculous power of giving youth to anyone who bathed in its waters. Somewhere southwest of Lake Michigan, Pierre saw buffalo for the first time, marvelled at the lush vegetation of forest and prairie, and became enamored of a dusky savage maiden. He could not speak to her nor she to him, but the language of love was not therefore impeded. The liaison established, the Indian girl led Pierre into the wilderness and showed him the natural grandeur of the area. But as he gazed at the horizon a prairie fire developed and soon grew into a thing of terror. To Pierre, unused to such a phenomenon, the whole thing was diabolical. "He saw before him the lake of fire prepared for the devil and his angels."⁷ The smoke and clouds assumed mephistophelian shapes, and the scene to Pierre was one huge animated hell. Terrified, he fled back to the wigwam and there cowered in a corner until he could make a dash for the canoe in which the French explorers were departing. Thus Pierre left the infernal regions behind, and the Indian maiden desolate.

Another story by Hall utilizes one of the legendary characters of the early border, the crazed frontiersman who had suffered the loss of family and home through Indian depredations and who vowed eternal vengeance on his enemies. Samuel Monson, the protagonist

⁶ James Hall, *The Wilderness and the Warpath* (New York, 1846), 170.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 133.

of "The Indian Hater," was such a figure. The mere sight of an Indian was enough to stir his blood wildly, and he shot at all red men without provocation and regardless of circumstances. Hall's story focuses on the killing by Monson of an Indian who had been acting as a wilderness guide. Following the homicide Monson explained to the narrator his past history and the compulsion for his deed. "The Indian Hater," of course, is a fictional version of the history of Colonel John Moredock, once a member of the Illinois territorial legislature.⁸ It is of interest to remember that Herman Melville incorporated the Moredock episode, giving James Hall due credit as his source, in chapters xxv-xxvii of *The Confidence Man*. The figure of the Indian hater, considerably amplified and interpreted, is also central in the well known frontier novel of Robert Montgomery Bird, *Nick of the Woods*, 1837.

One group of Hall's tales is concerned with early French settlements along the Kaskaskia River and near its confluence with the Mississippi. The three stories dealing with this theme are "A Legend of Carondelet," "Michel de Coucy," and "The French Village." All are rich in local color and present a sympathetic and understanding view of the casual, rather indolent life of these eighteenth century communities, but only one, "The French Village," employs a strong folk custom, the shivaree. The tale hinges on the long delayed marriage of a spinster and an old bachelor. Baptiste Menou and Jeannette Duval were neighbors and old acquaintances. Baptiste "was a bachelor of forty, a tall, lank, hard-featured personage, as straight as a ramrod, and almost as thin, with stiff, black hair, sunken cheeks, and a complexion a tinge darker than that of the aborigines."⁹ Jeanette was cheerful and happy, and unlike Baptiste "was brisk, and fat, and plump."¹⁰ Eventually after ten years or more of courtship the marriage took place and the villagers in great glee provided a "charivary"—a bedlam of discord. "Fiddles, flutes and tambourines, drums, cow-horns, tin trumpets, and kettles, mingled their discordant notes with a strange accompaniment of laughter, shouts, and singing."¹¹ The dour bridegroom expostulated that a shivaree was unnecessary to celebrate the wedding of those who had not previously been married, but his complaints were unavailing, and finally he had to provide refreshments for the whole motley assemblage. The shivaree is thus one of the key incidents in

⁸ James Hall, *The Romance of Western History* (Cincinnati, 1857), 343-347.

⁹ Hall, *Tales of the Border*, 107-108.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 111.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 121.

this tale of an early French village, and Hall's use of a well established folk custom gives his story an appropriate atmosphere.¹²

In several other stories, however, Hall made a more integral use of folklore and employed popular superstitions both thematically and artistically. Without their folklore basis such stories as "The Divining Rod," "The Seventh Son," and "Pete Featherton" would have neither point nor substance.¹³

"The Divining Rod" despite its title does not concern the practice of dowsing to locate subterranean springs but is rather a slight variant of the traditional search for buried treasure. Zedekiah Bangs, an ignorant and illiterate preacher, was quick to accept popular delusions and superstitions. He had an alert but untrained mind "so that while at one time he discovered and exposed a popular error with wonderful acuteness, at another he blindly adopted the grossest fallacy."¹⁴ Bangs learned that somewhere along the Cumberland River traders carrying a considerable treasure in specie had been so closely pressed by Indians that in order to escape with their lives they had to conceal the money and flee the vicinity. According to well established rumor, they had never returned for their silver coin, which remained cached in the original spot. One of the homesteaders in the neighborhood was a "waterwitch," one who had been successful in locating buried springs or streams by the manipulation of a hazel twig. Subsequently he determined to find a magic rod which would locate minerals as well as water, and supposedly he had enjoyed some success in discovering deposits of iron ore. The man himself had died before he could locate the desired treasure, but his widow had preserved the wand and permitted Zedekiah Bangs to use it. After much cautious investigation the preacher felt he had found the cache of silver in a river cliff, access to which could be had only by descending a rope flung down from the overhanging rock. Wary but also avaricious, Bangs made the descent, and after clutching the rope precariously for a time managed to enter the cave. But he found nothing. Then, striving to clamber back to the top of the bluff, he discovered that his accomplice had vanished with his horse. Only after an all night vigil was Bangs

¹² For further use of the shivaree in frontier writing see John T. Flanagan, "A Note on 'Shivaree,'" *American Speech*, XV (February, 1940), 109-110.

¹³ These stories appeared in several volumes all published before 1835. Hall's fiction had a fairly wide circulation in periodical and book form. Mary Russell Mitford reprinted three of his tales in her *Stories of American Life* (London, 1830): "The French Village," "The Indian Hater," and "Pete Featherton."

¹⁴ Hall, *Legends of the West*, 269.

rescued, a friend and former convert eventually pulling him up the side of the cliff. Bangs would not admit that his quest was futile nor that the divining rod was worthless. But he did express some doubt about the legality of his claim to the treasure if it were unearthed. His conviction that a dowsing stick could properly be used to locate buried metals was unshaken.

In "The Seventh Son" Hall utilized one of the oldest popular superstitions, namely, that the seventh son of a seventh son was endowed with marvelous curative powers. This belief is the backbone of the tale. Jeremy Geode, the protagonist, was a young man of unusual scholarship and ability who took a medical degree at an eastern college. Following graduation he chose to practise in the western states and settled down in an obscure village on the border of the prairies. Since patients were few in number, Dr. Geode devoted his time to wandering through the adjacent country and collecting specimens with scientific exactness. "His collection of stuffed birds, impaled insects, and pickled reptiles might well bring his sanity in question with those who could see no advantage in this hideous resurrection of dead bodies."¹⁵ These collections, plus his taming of a crow and a black cat for companionship, brought upon him the suspicion of the countryside and certainly did nothing to advance his professional prosperity. Moreover, an unscrupulous competitor began to circulate scurrilous rumors about him until he had a difficult time making ends meet.

Then one day Dr. Geode, loyal to his hippocratic oath, responded to an emergency call and brought about a cure. The patient out of gratitude, conveyed a secret to him. The doctor himself had become aware of frontier superstitions and was quite willing to make use of them without betraying his own scientific training. Impelled by his erstwhile patient he prepared a neat card on which a circle and triangle as well as some Greek letters were imposed in red ink. His advertisement now read, "Doctor Jeremy Geode, the seventh son of a celebrated Indian doctor, would cure all diseases, by means of the wonderful Hygeian Tablet, or Kickapoo Panacea, of which he was sole proprietor."¹⁶ The result was unexpected prosperity. The combination of being a seventh son and an Indian doctor (implying not so much aboriginal associations as a knowledge of primitive pharmacopoeia) was too much for the community to resist. The sick and the ailing began to stream to his door despite the fact that his medical rival began to denounce him as an impostor.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 295.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 297.

Victims of "yaller janders," of the shaking "ager," of "rheumatiz" and "billiards fever" came to him for medication and comfort. Trust in his diagnosis was sovereign, and no one seemed to mind when the physician cured his patients by conventional therapy.

Finally an old friend, the narrator of the story, visited Dr. Geode in disguise and asked him what malady afflicted him. The doctor, recognizing his visitor, diagnosed the case as "cacoethes scribendi." When Dr. Geode was asked to justify his resort to trickery and superstition to further his profession, he replied that he could not morally defend it but that he was not prepared to find moral fault with a kind of behavior which cured men through their own weaknesses. "One half of the diseases which afflict mankind are imaginary," he said, "and should be treated as such. I practise upon this rule, and have found *faith* quite as valuable as *physic*."¹⁷ Moreover, he added, this method had permitted him to gain an intimate understanding of the way in which superstitions operated and had revealed new insights into the curious relationship of mind and matter.

Subsequently Dr. Geode left the prairie settlement and returned to an eastern hospital, but he could not put his past behind him. For a short time later, being again called in an emergency while on a visit to the frontier, he met a female practitioner in the sick room who showed Dr. Geode his own Kickapoo tablet and called upon him to have faith in the "mysterious figures, and charmed words, drawn upon it by the hand of the seventh son of a celebrated Indian doctor . . ."¹⁸ The medical folklore of this particular frontier thus ran full circle and showed no signs of dying. And this time Dr. Geode could only laugh at himself and the female healer.

Hall used a different kind of superstition in the story of "Pete Featherton," one of the best early American tales. In a long expository preface to his story Hall observed that the average frontier dwellers lacked the usual assortment of supernatural figures: witches, ghosts, brownies. Anticipating Henry James' famous enumeration of the romantic themes and scenes in which America was lacking,¹⁹ Hall remarked that the frontier had no places where ghosts could conveniently live. "We have no baronial castles, nor ruined mansions;—no turrets crowned with ivy, nor ancient abbeys crumbling into decay . . ."²⁰ But he added emphatically, wonders and mysteries have graced the valley of the Mississippi, and supernatural events

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 300.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 304.

¹⁹ Henry James, *Hawthorne* (New York, 1879), 42-43.

²⁰ Hall, *The Wilderness and the War Path*, 153.

have occurred. With this introduction past, we are permitted to make the acquaintance of Pete Featherton.

Pete was a young Kentuckian, bold, vigorous, strong. "His red hair and sanguine complexion, announced an ardent temperament; his tall form, and bony limbs, indicated an active frame inured to hardships; his piercing eye and high cheek bones, evinced the keenness and resolution of his mind. He was adventurous, frank, and social—boastful, credulous, illiterate, and at times wonderfully addicted to the marvelous."²¹ When sober Pete was quiet and friendly; but when slightly inebriated his exuberance knew no bounds and he instantly was transformed into a regular ring-tailed roarer, "invested with the agreeable properties of the snapping-turtle, the alligator, and the steamboat . . ." In such a situation he could like Davy Crockett whip his weight in wild cats and ride a streak of lightning. Pete was a farmer and a hunter, fairly competent at making a crop of corn but always eager to join a shucking or log rolling and perhaps happiest when he could shoulder his rifle Brown Bess and go off in pursuit of deer. It is the curious nature of one particular hunting trip that makes Hall's tale.

Pete had started out one morning because the cabin was short of venison. But before he entered the woods he passed the local doggery and responded to the social invitation to "light off and take something." One drink led to a sequel so that much time was lost before Pete resumed his hunt. When he finally reached hunting territory he was surprised to find that things looked strange. Not only were there no deer, but even the country seemed changed and familiar landmarks were missing. His own shadow had a curious instability and revolved in a circle, and although the weather was intensely cold perspiration ran in large drops from his brow. When he strove to drink from a creek, the cold water recoiled and hissed from his hands and lips.

More and more baffled, Pete finally noticed with a leap of joy certain tracks in the snow, apparently tracks of deer. But he also observed the trail of a man, obviously fresh and indicating by its direction that the hunter was ahead of him. Pete quickened his pace. But the human tracks he was following began to look strange to him since the feet were obviously not mates. Pete thought that perhaps a devil had borrowed one large shoe to conceal a cloven hoof, thus causing the disparate footprints. Eventually by dint of fast walking Pete overtook the other hunter where he had stopped to sit on a log.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 155.

He was a small, thin, old man, with a grey beard of about a month's growth, and a long sallow melancholy visage, while a tarnished suit of snuff-coloured clothes, cut after the quaint fashion of some religious sect, hung loosely about his shrivelled person.²²

Pete tried to converse with the stranger, but drew no answer. Finally, after many questions and a friendly but heavy slap on the back, he forced the stranger to talk. But instead of a reply Pete got a warning. The stranger informed Pete that he was driving his own deer home and that Pete was an intruder who had no business trailing them. This rebuff, altogether illogical and unexpected, infuriated Pete who began to threaten the stranger. Then suddenly the stranger advanced toward him, blew his breath upon Brown Bess, and said, "Your gun is charmed! . . . From this day forward you will kill no deer."²³ After these words he calmly resumed the trail, leaving Pete flabbergasted and half conscious of a smell of brimstone.

Not wholly sure of the implications of the charm and more puzzled than ever, Pete resolved to return home. En route back to his cabin he passed within a few feet of a fine buck and instantly fired his rifle. But although Pete was normally celebrated for his marksmanship the deer was unhurt and bounded away. Without trying any further shots, Pete slunk into his cabin and put his rifle on its pegs.

His wife of course chided him for his long absence and placed small credence in the strange story which Pete had to tell. Next morning, indeed, Pete himself felt it was all a strange and illogical dream, and went forth to hunt as usual. But try as he would, he could kill nothing. The deer even teased him and tossed their antlers at him as they bounded across his path. Pete felt humiliated and disgraced.

At last Pete remembered that within the vicinity lived a veritable Indian doctor, neither an aboriginal medicine man nor yet a "mercury doctor" or regular physician, but a healer who worked without benefit of diploma or license and who operated largely by virtue of spells and charms. To him Pete went, bringing Brown Bess with him and confessing his strange experience. The Indian doctor looked wise, measured the gun's caliber, and told Pete to come back later. When the hunter returned, the Indian doctor gave him two rifle balls, one pink, the other silver.²⁴ These Pete was to use according

²² *Ibid.*, 161.

²³ *Ibid.*, 163.

²⁴ A more famous literary use of the idea of the silver bullet occurs in Eugene O'Neill's play *The Emperor Jones*.

to specific instructions. In a certain secluded hollow some distance away Pete would see a white fawn. He was to shoot the fawn. The fawn would be wounded but would not drop. Pete was to follow its trail, marked by its blood, until he saw a buck, which he was to kill with the second pellet. If he did these things correctly, the spell would be broken and Pete could resume his ordinary occupations.

Confident this time that he was equipped with magic to fight magic, Pete started out. He found and wounded the white fawn and then after a long pursuit discovered the buck; his second shot was also a success. As Hall concluded his tale, "The spell was broken—Brown Bess was restored to favour, and Pete Featherton never again wanted venison."²⁵

The story of Pete Featherton is told with considerable skill. Conspicuous in it, of course, is the supernaturalism borrowed from familiar literary sources and domiciled with an occasional fresh touch in the western backwoods. The strange hunter is not the usual devil; he is old and gray rather than red or black, he has neither tail nor horns, and there is no hint of any compact between him and man. Yet he apparently has a cloven hoof, a smell of brimstone lingers around him, and he can bespell his opponent. Other bits of supernaturalism color the story. Pete's shadow is undependable and revolves; watercourses seem to reverse themselves; deer prove invulnerable; the countryside assumes a strange and foreign appearance. Some of the amusement of the story stems, too, from the fact that Pete begins his hunt partly intoxicated and is surely the victim of his own delusions. The return of sobriety and self-confidence would probably make the Indian doctor's charms unnecessary, but Pete is a credulous frontiersman who thinks that strong magic is essential.

Hall's use of folklore and superstition in his tales is deliberate and contrived. The tone is similar to Irving's, perhaps: sly, carefully explanatory yet apparently credulous; amused yet slightly superior. Undoubtedly Hall saw the folk elements he employed as distinct contributions to the characterizations and plots of his narratives. But he also employed them as a distinct facet of the frontier he knew so well. In Hall's tales, therefore, folklore is not only manufactured by the frontiersman—it also reveals his mind and soul. Much of the material of Hall's tales was truly the possession, possibly the product, of the folk. James Hall was one of the earliest American romancers to understand this and to act upon his knowledge.

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²⁵ Hall, *The Wilderness and the War Path*, 168.

ODDS AND ENDS OF NORTH AMERICAN FOLKLORE ON BIRDS

By W. L. McATEE

This collection omits any items (or their analogues) published in the comprehensive work of the Bergens on "Animal and Plant Lore" (1899) or at any time, so far as I am aware, in the *Journal of American Folklore*. It excludes also geographic terms based on bird names; folk names, simply, which I long have been, and still am, treating in other writings; appellations apparently or actually involving the name of the Deity (McAtee, 1945 and 1951); assertions as to torpidity and luminosity in birds (McAtee, 1947, *bis*); weather-connected items in the compilations of Dunwoody (1883) and Garriott (1903); and Indian and Eskimo lore, which has already been rather thoroughly recorded. The field of regional summaries, likewise, has not been invaded. (As illustrated by: Gardner 1937; Rupp 1946; Thomas 1920; and Travis 1945.) In other words, the object has been to bring together scattered folklore of birds from sources, little or not at all used by compilers, and thus to make it available for future more complete gatherings.

The material is arranged under headings: *Medicinal uses*, *Omens*, "*Poison*" birds, *Weather-connected lore*, *Miscellaneous*, and *Verse*.

MEDICINAL USES

Medicaments derived from animal sources in olden times seem now to have been outlandish or even disgusting. There is no question, however, that many of them were actually used, and it may be convenient to have a fair representation of claims for them collected in one place. The birds concerned in this compilation (as elsewhere in this paper) are listed in systematic order.

Loon. "The loone is a water-fowl, alike in shape to the wobble [Great Auk], and as virtual for aches; which we order after the same manner." (Josselyn, 1672, p. 12.)

Cormorant. "They are very strengthening to the Stomach and cure the Bloody Flux." (Brickell, 1737, p. 212.)

Heron. "The Bill in Powder, causeth Sleep, the Grease in Anodyne, eases Pains, and has much the same Properties with the Bittern." (Brickell, 1737, p. 201.)

The third sort of *Bittern* (Green Heron). "The Skin and Feathers calcin'd, stop Bleeding. The Grease eases pains of the Gout,

helps Deafness, clears the sight, and is excellent bait to catch Fish with." (Brickell, 1737, p. 200.)

Ibises. "The white ibis, as well as the wood ibis, and all the other species of this genus . . . has the . . . oil bags of great size . . . tell me if the fat contained in these bags is not the very best lip-salve that can be procured." (Audubon, *Orn. Biogr.*, Vol. III, 1835, p. 177.)

Swans (Two wild species). "The Grease or Fat cleanses the Face from Morphew, and other Vices, and their Oil helps the Gout." (Brickell, 1737, p. 203.)

Goose (Apparently the Canada Goose). "A friend . . . sore troubled, for a long time, with the bloody-flux . . . at last was induced with a longing desire to drink the fat-dripping of a goose newly taken from the fire; which absolutely cured him . . ." (Josselyn, 1672, p. 145.)

Geese (All wild species). Their flesh is "apt to breed Agues in cold weakly Constitutions; The Oil or Grease is exceeding hot, and of thin Parts, piercing and dissolving. It cures Baldness, helps Deafness, pain and noise in the Ears, is good against Palsies, Lameness, Numbness, Cramps, pains and contractions of the Sinews, and many other Disorders. The Dung is used with success in the Jaundice, Scurvy, Dropsy, and Gout. The green Dung gathered in the Spring, and gently dried, is best." (Brickell, 1737, p. 203.)

Turkey Vulture. "The bones of their head hung about the neck helpeth the headach." (Josselyn, 1674, p. 76.) "The Fat thereof dissolved into an Oil, is recommended mightily against old Aches and Sciatica Pains." (Clayton, 1693, p. 991.) "It is fixed to a spit with the feathers on and all and thus allowed to roast by a good fire until the fat is dripping. This is then collected to be kept and causes incredible relief if rubbed in for dry aches, pains in the joints or in the back for gouty twinges." (Hesseliuss, 1711-1724, pp. 13-14. This particular note in 1712.)

Hawks (apparently all species). "Hawkes grease is very good for sore eyes." (Josselyn, 1674, p. 76.)

Kites (possibly the sharp-shinned hawk). "A Powder made of them eases the Gout, and helps the Epilepsy; the Grease is Effectual to the same Intention, and the Gall is an excellent Remedy in most Disorders of the Eyes." (Brickell, 1737, p. 175.)

Goss-Hawks (possibly Cooper's hawk). "The Flesh . . . Hath much the same Virtues with that of the Kite. The Dung is exceeding hot, and being drank fasting in Wine, is said to cause Conception." (Brickell, 1737, p. 176.)

Eagles (two species). "The Flesh . . . is medicinal against the Gout; the bones of the Skull in powder, are good against the Megrim; the Brain drank in Wine helps the Jaundice, and the Gall is of excellent use in most disorders of the Eyes, and applied helps the bitings of Serpents and Scorpions, &c. The Dung opens obstructions, and applied outwardly, ripens Tumors and pestilential Buboes." (Brickell, 1737, p. 173.)

Bald Eagle. "The skin of a gripe, drest with the down on, is good to wear upon the stomach for the pain and coldness of it." (Josselyn, 1672, p. 146.)

Osprey. "Their beaks excell for the toothach; picking the gums therewith till they bleed." (Josselyn, 1672, p. 146.)

Pheasant (i.e. the ruffed grouse). "Their Flesh is good in heck-tick Fevers, the Gall sharpens the Sight, and the Blood resists Poyson." (Brickell, 1737, p. 183.)

Partridge (i.e. the bob-white). "The Blood helps the eyes, wounded or Bloodshot, and the Gall is one of the most eminent things in the World for defects in the Eyes." (Brickell, 1737, pp. 185-186.)

Turkie (the wild turkey). "Their eggs are very wholesome and restore decayed nature exceedingly." (Josselyn, 1674, p. 78.)

Crane (the sandhill crane). "The Gall is good against Palsies, Consumptions, Blindness and Deafness. The Fat or Grease helps all hardness, being of the Nature of Goose-grease." (Brickell, 1737, p. 201.)

Gulls (all species). "The Grease . . . is good against the Gout, and hard swelling, strengthens the Nerves, and eases Pains in several parts of the Body." (Brickell, 1737, p. 204.)

Sea-mew (probably the Laughing Gull). "The Flesh . . . is said to help the falling sickness; and the Ashes of the whole Bird, the Gravel in the Bladder and Kidneys." (Brickell, 1737, p. 205.)

Wobble (or Great Auk). "Our way (for they are very sovereign for aches) is to make mummy of them; that is to salt them well, and dry them in an earthen pot well glazed in an oven; or else (which is the better way) to bury them under ground for a day or two; then quarter them, and stew them in a tin stewpan, with a very little water." (Josselyn, 1672, p. 147.)

Turtle Dove (now called the mourning dove). "Their Flesh has the same Virtues with the Pigeon but is peculiarly good against the Bloody Flux." (Brickell, 1737, p. 186.)

Wild Pigeon (The Passenger Pigeon). "The Blood helps disorders in the Eyes, the Coats of the Stomach in Powder, cures bloody

Fluxes. The Dung is the hottest of all Fowls, and is a wonderful attractive, yet accompanied with an Anodyne force, and helps the Headach, Megrim, pain in the Side and Stomach, Pleurisy, Cholick, Apoplexy, Lethargy, and many other Disorders." (Brickell, 1737, p. 187.) "The tough skins from the inside of wild pigeons' gizzards, hung up to dry, and grated to a fine powder, is an infallible cure for indigestion." (Entry of December 8, 1796, quoted from Mr. Lawrence of New Jersey, *Simcoe*, 1911, p. 297.)

Cuckoo (two species). "Their ashes are good against the Stone and Epilepsy. The dung given in Canary is good against the biting of a Mad Dog." (Brickell, 1737, p. 180.)

Roadrunner. "The Mexicans often keep this bird in a semi-domesticated state in order to kill them in case of sickness; for they firmly believe that their flesh is certain cure for many disorders." (Southern Texas, H. E. Dresser, *Ibis*, N.S., I, 1865, p. 467.)

Screech Owl. "The Flesh . . . is accounted good in Palsies and Melancholly. The Grease and Gall is good against Spots in the Eyes and to strengthen the Eye-sight. The whole Bird, not plucked, calcined and taken into the Throat, opens the Imposthums of the Quinsie to a wonder, and the Brain, eaten, helps the Head-ach." (Brickell, 1737, p. 189.)

Woodpeckers (all). "The Flesh . . . helps Inflammations, and the Gall with Honey and juice of Rue is used in disorders of the Eyes." (Brickell, 1737, p. 189.)

Pileated Woodpecker. "There's a Tradition . . . that the Tongue of one of these wood-peckers dryed will make the Teeth drop out if picked therewith and cure the Tooth-ach." (Clayton, 1693, p. 991.)

Kingbird. A boy hunting, said he was trying to get a King Bird, that his sister was very sick with heart disease and that if she would eat the uncooked heart of a King Bird it would cure her." (George Cahoon, *The Warbler*, 2nd Ser. I [1], 1905, pp. 7-8.)

Swallows (all). "The flesh . . . is said to help Dimness of sight, the falling sickness, and many other Disorders. The nest outwardly applied, is of excellent use in Quinsies, redness of the Eyes, &c." (Brickell, 1737, p. 197.)

Raven. "The Ashes given for two or three Days together, cures the Epilepsy and Gout. The Brain performs the same thing, the Grease, Blood and Eggs make the Hair Black. The Eggs help the Spleen but cause Abortion." (Brickell, 1737, p. 180.)

Wren (probably the Carolina Wren). "The Flesh is said to help the stoppage of Urine, and to have the same Virtues with the Sparrow." (Brickell, 1737, p. 198.)

Mockingbird. "The folkways of the Okefenokee swamper are similar to those of swamp folk everywhere, though one belief which seems to be peculiar to the region is that stuttering can be cured by eating mockingbird eggs." (Kennedy, 1942, p. 23.)

Throstle (i.e. some thrush). "Being roasted with Myrtle-berries, they help most sorts of Fluxes." (Brickell, 1737, p. 192.)

Lark (i.e. the Meadowlark). "The Blood drank fresh with Vinegar, helps the Stone in the Bladder." (Brickell, 1737, p. 193.)

OMENS

This is an extensive branch of folklore of which, however, a relatively small proportion of the records of bird portents survive the exceptions made in the introduction. One of them, relating to the southern Appalachians, employs the general term, "bird." "If a bird . . . dies in your hand you will get the weak trembles and drop everything you take hold of. If a bird weaves a hair of your head into its nest you will have headaches until that nest falls to pieces; and if ever a bird builds in your shoe or pocket, or any of your clothes, you may prepare to die within the year." (Miles, *Spirit of the Mountains*, 1905, p. 99.) The loon, a favorite with folklorists, is "Called 'Bad Luck Bird' by the natives [of the Sea Islands of Georgia], who will not speak of it, or if possible even look at it when they meet it in a journey by water." (Hoxie, 1885, p. 29.) While recording the common beliefs as to the storm petrels, that "Their appearance portends bad weather," Mrs. Simcoe adds: "To kill them is unlucky. Each bird is supposed . . . to contain the soul of a dead sailor." (*Diary*, 1791 [1911], p. 47.) The Reverend J. H. Linsley in his *Birds of Connecticut* (1843) noted that the cry of the bittern is a cause of superstitious fear and recorded that one man hearing it ran a mile, saying, that the Devil was after him. "A token," said Archibald Rutledge, writing of the Santee Country, South Carolina, "is an apparition foretelling death," and cites as examples an eagle feeding with black vultures, a wild turkey standing alone under a certain great oak tree, and an albino robin. (*Outlook*, 1919, p. 503.)

Another instance from the Sea Islands of Georgia, given by Hoxie is that anyone molesting the nest of the Ground Dove, there called mourning dove, would be "mourned to death" by the grief-stricken birds. (1885, p. 63.) Clayton, in his early writing about the birds of Virginia, said: "Abundance of people here look upon [whip-poor-wills] . . . as birds of ill omen, and they are very melancholy if one of them happens to light upon their house, or near their door, and set up his cry (as they will sometimes upon the very threshold) for they firmly believe one of the family will die very

soon after." (1693, p. 991.) Among farm birds favored by the belief that killing them will cause the cows to give bloody milk is the barn swallow; this is recorded from Pennsylvania by Wilson (*Amer. Ornithology*, Vol. V, 1812, p. 40). Canada Jays are supposed to embody the souls of hunters or lumbermen who die in the north woods and it, therefore, brings bad luck to kill them. (Rothrock, 1921, p. 13.) In western North Carolina, it means seven years of bad luck to kill a raven. (Mason, *Great Smokies*, 1927, p. xviii)—a useful superstition, as the bird is scarce and needs protection. In the same region, W. L. Hammett wrote me of the belief that "if one kills a goldfinch [there called yellow-bird] someone in the family will suffer a broken arm or leg before the end of the year." (Letter of 1936.) To end this section on a more cheerful note, we cite the Ozark fancy that "If a redbird flies across a girl's path . . . she will be kissed before night." (Wilson, *Folk-Say*, 1930, p. 163.)

"POISON" BIRDS

Writing of the frigate, or man-o'-war, bird, H. H. Bailey said: "The name of 'poison bird' is given them by local fishermen, who think that they catch their fish by dropping some excrement which is then eaten by the fish below, and which soon becomes sick and rises to the surface, when it is then caught by the Man-O'-War bird." (*Birds of Florida*, 1925, p. 19.)

In Louisiana in 1912, I was told that the wood ibis scratches scurf from its nearly bald head, which falling into the water stupefies fishes and makes them easy prey. (McAtee, 1913.) Samuel R. Brown in 1817 wrote: "It is also reported that the turkey buzzard has the power of killing the rattlesnake by its intolerable stench—which it most powerfully emits by a violent fluttering in the air a little above the snake's head." (*Western Gazetteer*, p. 79.) Jonathan Carver in 1779 published a yarn concerning the fish hawk or osprey which is reminiscent of that about the man-o'-war bird, cited above. "It skims over the lakes and rivers, and sometimes seems to lie expanded on the water, as he hovers so close to it, and having by some attractive power drawn the fish within its reach, darts suddenly upon them. The charm it makes use of is supposed to be an oil contained in a small bag in the body, and which nature has by some means or other supplied him with the power of using it for this purpose; it is however very certain that any bait touched with a drop of oil collected from this bird is an irresistible lure for all sorts of fish, and insures the angler great success." (pp. 468-469.) Josselyn thought the wild turkey's eggs wholesome and restorative, but added that "the French

say they breed the Leprosie" (1674, p. 78). In his account of the Carolina parakeet, Catesby stated that "Their Guts is certain and speedy poison to cats." (*Carolina*, Vol. I, 1731, p. 11.) Wilson, who extended the property, on the basis of popular opinion, to the brains and intestines of the bird, tried to test the matter experimentally and finally made one trial which proved negative. (*Amer. Ornithology*, Vol. III, 1811, p. 93.)

WEATHER-CONNECTED LORE

The simplest instances are those in which certain birds are regarded as harbingers of spring. Many are so recognized; among which the following come within the limitations of this paper. The return of the killdeer from the South is an accepted proof of the arrival of spring, as it is believed that the bird never makes a mistake in coming too soon (Smith, 1930). "When the fish hawks come north, winter's over." (G. W. Twiford, Roanoke Island, N.C. Collected by Phoebe Knappen.) As to the same bird, or osprey, "On the Eastern Shore [of Maryland] it is maintained that they always arrive on St. Patrick's Day, March 17." (Kirkwood, 1895, p. 305.) "It is an old observation, in Pennsylvania, that when the whip-poor-will . . . arrives, it is time to go bare-footed." (Barton, 1799, p. xi.)

Association of the arrival of migrant birds with planting time is proverbial and the succeeding illustrations may be added to the recorded evidences. As to the red-headed woodpecker, it is said in the "South": "You can always plant your corn when they come or anything else . . . you can calculate there won't be no more frost." (Johnson, 1905, p. 185.) Peter Kalm recorded of the same bird, March 11, 1749, that in New Jersey, "When they stay in flocks in the woods, at the beginning of winter, the people look upon it as a sign of a mild winter." (1937 revision, Vol. I, p. 255.) Jonathan Carver (1779, p. 467) wrote of the whip-poor-will: "As soon as the Indians are informed by its notes of its return, they conclude that the frost is entirely gone . . . and on receiving this assurance of milder weather begin to sow their corn." Bartram refers to: "The pewit, or black cap flycatcher of Catesby," which he says, "is the first bird of passage which appears in the spring in Pennsylvania . . . and then . . . we may plant . . . almost every kind of esculent garden feeds, without fear or danger from frosts . . ." (*Travels*, 1792, p. 284.)

In one of his few references to bird folklore, Audubon said: "There is an absurd notion that its [the loon's] plaintive cries are a sure indication of violent storms. Sailors, in particular, are ever

apt to consider these call-notes as portentous." (*Birds of America*, Vol. VII, 1844, p. 283.) Henry M. Pancoast of Hancock's Bridge, New Jersey, wrote me: "The loon is a weather prophet, he always fishes with the wind; if the wind is going to change he will fly to the windward before it comes out. The fishermen on our Bay and coast always watch him for a change in wind. He never fails." (Letters of 1936.) Phoebe Knappen found near Indian Head, Charles County, Md., that the negroes believed if the loon called, a north-easter would blow up thus spoiling the fishing; hence they endeavored to kill the loons before they could cry up a storm.

An early account of the yellow-billed cuckoo as a foreteller of rain is that of Alexander Wilson. "It is also called in Virginia the Rain Crow, being observed to be most clamorous immediately before rain." (*Amer. Ornithology*, Vol. IV, 1811, p. 13.) Writing of the pileated woodpecker, Colin C. Sanborn said that in Wisconsin "The lumber-jacks call them 'Logcocks' and claim it is a sign of rain when they call." (1921, p. 120.) At Hudson, New York, the Canada Jay was observed to "repeat its notes for a quarter of an hour together; and this it generally did immediately before snow or falling weather." (Wilson, *Amer. Ornithology*, Vol. III, 1811, p. 35.) And E. C. Weeks at Sanbornton, N.H., wrote: "When my grandmother spotted the bird I knew as the redpoll it was a rain bird and was soon going to rain. Then along came the snow bunting and it surely would snow." (Letter of 1936.) Longer prevision not only of the weather, but of its effects, was attributed to white ibises in Louisiana according to Stanley Arthur. "In the lowlands the ibises are held in esteem as prophets. If their nests are placed high, high water may be looked for; if the nests are placed in low bushes the season will be one of low water." (1918, p. 30.)

An early Pennsylvania German belief was that no barn frequented by swallows would be struck by lightning. (Wilson, *Amer. Orn.*, Vol. V, 1812, p. 40.)

MISCELLANEOUS

Manx Shearwater. "They are to be seen at all seasons in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, which has given rise to some curious ideas among the sailors, viz., that these birds never breed . . ." (Reeks, 1870, p. 407.)

Storm Petrel. "Old J. D. E. Sisson (of New Bedford [Massachusetts]) tells me of the sailor's belief: that the Mother Carey Chickens never go to land—that they carry their eggs under their wings and incubate them there." (Gurdon Trumbull's ms. notes.)

Brown Pelican. "The Gall of this Bird cleanses Silver." (Brickell, 1737, p. 211.)

Gannett. "His fat or grease is as yellow as saffron, and the best thing known to preserve fire arms from rust." (Lawson, 1714, p. 246.)

Great Blue Heron. "The Great Heron is said to be fat at the full moon, and lean at its decrease," but this is not universally true. (Wilson, *Amer. Orn.*, Vol. VIII, 1814, p. 30.) This is a transfer from the lore of the closely related European Heron (Swainson, 1886, p. 145). As the birds feed by night as well as by day, the supposition is that they put in more time at it on moonlit nights and thus gain in weight.

Osprey. After telling how the Bald Eagle forces the Fishing Hawk to drop its prey, which is then seized by the eagle, Catesby added: "It is remarkable that whenever the Hawk catches a Fish, he calls, as it were, for the Eagle, who always obeys the call, if within hearing" (1731, p. 2). If that were a fact, it would go far toward justifying the name, "eagle's jackal," sometimes applied to the osprey. A Virginia account of the traditional relation between these birds [apparently not paralleled in European lore] is: "At firs' de fish hawk couldn' build a nes' but he could catch fish. De eagle couldn' catch fish but he could build a nes'. So dey all had a 'greement. De eagle 'greed to show de fish hawk how to build a nes' if de fish hawk would show de eagle how to catch fish. So de eagle done showed de fish hawk how to build de nes', and den de fish hawk went back on his 'greement, and wouldn't show de eagle how to catch a fish. An' dey all do say dat from dat day to dis, de eagle gets every fish he can whut de fish hawk catches." (Towns, 1927, p. 22.)

Sora. Sudden appearance and disappearance of this rail, together with its apparently weak flight, give rise to some peculiar beliefs, as, "that they bury themselves in the mud . . . [or] change into frogs [in winter. James River, Virginia.]" (Wilson, *Amer. Orn.*, Vol. VI, 1812, p. 28.) George Ord, quoted on p. 39 of the same volume, says: "I have heard it observed, that on the increase of the moon, the Rail improves in fatness, and decreases in a considerable degree with that Planet."

American Coot. "The Bluepeters (coots) down east [i.e. in eastern North Carolina], according to the residents of that section . . . turn into Bullfrogs in the summer" [they migrate northward]. (Brimley, 1889.)

Cuckoo. Uncle Rufus of Paducah, Kentucky, said 'you couldn't kill a rain crow with any bullet except a silver bullet, because he

was under Old Nick's protection.' (Irvin S. Cobb, *Exit Laughing*, 1941, pp. 57-58.)

"Owls can't see in the daytime" [a common folk belief, but untrue]. "Owls knock you down at night and chew your ears." (Pennsylvania, Carr. 1934, p. 292.) In Virginia, a girl terrified by nocturnal screaming, "The next day . . . went to [Mammy Caroline] . . . to learn the source of the mysterious sound. 'Oh, dat's de ole owl bird. Yassum, dat's what it is, and it sho does sound awful. Sometimes when I is settin' in mah cabin and I heah's dem way down in de woods, I say, no sah, dat ain't de old own bird—dat' de ole folks talking.' She referred to ghosts." (Towns, 1927, p. 20.)

Chimney Swift, which is called "The troculus." "They commonly have four or five young ones; and when they go away, which is much about the time that swallows use to depart, they never fail to throw down one of their young birds into the room by way of gratitude . . . I have more than once observed that, against the ruin of the family, these birds will suddenly forsake the house, and come no more." (Josselyn, 1672, p. 142.)

Wren (probably applied to any species). "There is legend . . . among the people of this section [North Carolina] that one day a Hawk caught a Wren that was trespassing [high in the air], and was going to eat him, when his pity was moved by the hard pleadings of the Wren. The Hawk . . . let the Wren go upon his promising . . . that he would never be caught flying higher than the fences." That is why wrens keep close to the ground. (Smithwick, 1891.) A more elaborate folk explanation is reported from Virginia. Mammy Caroline said: "Yassum, dat's de little wood wren [Carolina wren], but don' put de [bird] house any highah dan de co'nah of de fence.' I asked why. 'Well, I always done heah dat de wren bird don't go no highah dan de fence . . .' But why? I begged. 'Well, I always heah dat dey said dis, but I didn't heah' 'em say it. De eagle an' de turkey buzzard had a 'spute. Deh 'sputed an' 'sputed over which could fly de highes'. Of co'se, say de eagle, 'evahbody knows dat I can fly de highes' of any bird . . . No, you can't, say de turkey buzzard, I can fly de highes'. So dey bof flew highah and highah till dey flew as high as any bird can fly, and of co'se de eagle was de highes'. Now, say de eagle, you see, I done tol' you I could fly de highes'. But de little old wren bird had all de time been a hidin' undah de ole eagle's wing, and he flew out an' lit on de eagle's haid, and de little ole wren bird say, 'No you can't, foh now I is de highes' of any bird whut flies'. Dat make de old eagle so mad dat he chase dat little wren bird down, down, way down to de cornah

of de fence, an' he say, Now little wren bird, don' you evah let me catch you any highah dan de fence, or I'll kill you. An' I always did heah dat dey nevah go any highah dan de fence'." (Towns, 1927, pp. 21-22.) This is manifestly a version of a European legend about a wren and eagle (both different from the American species) in which the eagle gave the wren such a stroke with his wing that it has never been able to fly higher than a hawthorn bush. (Swainson, 1886, p. 36.)

Mockingbird. "One of the first persons I heard speak against killing a bird was old Aunt Celie, whose cabin was in a cotton-field at Blue Pete [near Archer, Florida]. She said to me, 'Honey, when you gits big enough to tote a gun don't never kill nary a mockin' bird. Every one of them little fowls takes kyer of some good man or woman what's daid, and when you hear one asingin' at night you knows dat some good soul done come back and is walkin' about. A sperit kaint never leave its grave lessen its mockin' bird hollers for it to come out'." (Pearson, 1937, p. 8.)

According to Stetson Kennedy, Folklore has it that no mockingbirds are to be seen on Fridays, and the story goes like this: "Once there was a man who was very bad. He robbed and stole and was always gettin in fights and killin people. But he was awful good to birds, and mocking birds was his favorites. At last when somebody killed him he went straight to hell. The birds hated to see him in hell, and they tried to get him out. But the fire was too hot and pretty soon they give up—all except the mockingbirds. They got together and decided to tote sand until they squenched the fire. So they set a day and all agreed on it. And that's way nobody don't never see a mockingbird on Friday. They aint on earth that day—they all gone to hell with a grain of sand in their mouth." (Palmetto Country, 1942, pp. 12-13.) Peter Kalm's Journal for October 27, 1748, notes that in Pennsylvania "it is so shy that if anybody comes and looks at its eggs it leaves the nest and never comes back"; also if the young are caged, "the last time the mother feeds them, she finds means to poison them in order the sooner to deliver them from slavery and wretchedness." (1937 revision, Vol. I, p. 116.)

Catbird. In Montgomery County, Maryland, "The children say it calls snakes; and one lad went so far as to say that the last eggs laid by that bird all hatch out snakes." (J. H. Langille, *Wilson Bul.*, 9(3), Sept. 1902, p. 102.) On the other hand in Virginia, Mammy Caroline called this species "de snake bird [cos]; he chases away de snakes." (Towns, 1927, p. 20.)

Brown Thrasher. Called planting bird and corn planter in various localities from its singing in its recitative manner at the season

indicated, this bird has a story of the same connection devoted to it in Massachusetts. "Old Caesar would go fishing on Sunday. Otherwise he was a well-behaved old slave. It was in the Puritanical days of the pioneers of Dorchester backwoods and he was notorious for this bad habit . . . One pleasant May morning, after a special lecture [by his master] on Satan and Sabbath-breakers, Caesar, nevertheless slipt away down behind the barn to the little lake, rowed out from shore in his boat a little way, and began to fish. And as he fished there came a brown thrasher to the nearby birch-top and sang; and these were the words which Old Caesar, with his guilty conscience stirred, thought he heard him sing:

'Caesar, Caesar,
Go to church, go to church
Fishy fisher, fishy fisher
Devil catch you.'

"Caesar stopped his fishing, aghast. Nothing like this had ever happened to him. He listened, and the brown thrasher sang it over and over again. Whereupon he caught up his oars, rowed ashore, rushed up to the house, got into his good clothes, and hurried to church, a little bit late, but safe. Therefore, they called the brown thrasher the missionary bird because he converted Old Caesar, who was never known to go fishing on Sunday again." (Packard, 1921.)

Snowbird (the Slate-colored Junco). "In some parts of New England I found the opinion pretty general, that the Snow-bird in summer is transformed into the small Chipping Sparrow . . ." (Wilson, *Amer. Orn.*, Vol. II, 1810, p. 131.) Brimley (1889, p. 109) mentions the same belief in North Carolina, "sparrows," a general term, being substituted for "Chipping sparrow," the name of a single species.

VERSE

The folk verse here appended was collected for another purpose, for which references and localities had to be omitted. All pertain to the southeastern part of the country and appear to be of negro origin.

Ole Massa Buzzard, yo' needn't fly so high,
Yo' cain't make a livin'-a-flyin' in de sky.

[*Buzzard—Turkey Vulture*]

De fish-hawk kitched a big fat mullet
But it foun' its way down de eagle's gullet.

[*Fish-hawk—Osprey; Eagle—Bald Eagle.*]

High-hole in de holler tree,
He poke his bill in for to see,

De lizard kotch him by de snout,
He call for someone to pull him out.

[*High-hole—Flicker*]
— — — — —

Jaybird in de martin's nest
To save his soul he got no rest.

Jaybird pullin' a two-mule plow
"Sparrow, where was you?"
"My laigs so long and limber, Lawd,
I'se skeered they'd break in two."

— — — — —
A jaybird sot on a hickry limb
He winked at me and I winked at him.
I threw a stone and hit his shin
Said he, "You better never do that agin."
[*Jaybird—Blue Jay; Martin—Purple Martin*]
— — — — —

De buzzard and de crow went ter de wa';
One mo' ribber fer ter cross;
De crow come back wid a broken ja';
One mo' ribber fer ter cross.
[*Buzzard—Turkey Vulture; Crow—the common eastern crow*]
— — — — —

A bullfrog dressed in soger's close
Went in de field to shoot some crows,
De crows smell powder and fly away,
De bullfrog mighty mad dat day.
[*Crow as in last*]
— — — — —

Succeed to de red buhd
An' likewise de wren;
Hope Heaven will take care of de ladies,
De Devil take care of the men
[*Redbird—Cardinal; Wren probably the Carolina wren*]
— — — — —

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(Continued from page 152)

P.O. Box 167, South Pasadena, California). Finally, *Contes Populaires Turcs* is available from the Turkish Educational Attaché, 7707 Empire State Building, New York 1, New York. Most of these items are free."

INDIANA UNIVERSITY FOLKLORE PROGRAM. The Folklore Program of Indiana University, now under the direction of Professor W. Edson Richmond, has invited various folklore scholars to act as Visiting Professors in the program during the next five or six years. The first of these, Professor Reidar Th. Christiansen of the Norsk Folke-minnesamling and the University of Oslo, will begin his work at Indiana University in the Fall semester, 1956. For this semester, Professor Christiansen will teach two seminars on the graduate level: Scandinavian Folklore and A Seminar on Folklore Theories and Techniques.

Although Professor Christiansen did not succeed the late Professor Knut Liestøl as Professor of Folklore at the University of Oslo until 1950, he has been connected throughout his academic life with the Norsk Folkeminnesamling, one of the world's greatest folklore archives—first as archivist and later as director. Concentrating his attention principally upon the folktale, Professor Christiansen nevertheless made himself an international reputation as an authority upon all aspects of folklore and he has long been a member of the editorial boards of *Arv* and *FF Communications* as well as a consultant for such publications as *JAF*, *MF*, and for such institutions as the *Irish Folklore Commission* and the newly organized *School of Scottish Studies*.

RESEARCH CENTER IN ANTHROPOLOGY, LINGUISTICS, AND FOLKLORE. Founded with the intention of bringing scholars in related fields physically as well as intellectually together, the Research Center in Anthropology, Linguistics, and Folklore conceived some years ago by Professors Thompson and Voegelin and their colleagues has become a reality. Archives and publications have now been coordinated and within a short time it will be possible for scholars to visit the Indiana University campus and easily obtain access to all of the work done and being done in these various fields.

BOOK REVIEWS

RITUAL ORIGINS

The Divine King in England. By Margaret Alice Murray. (London: Faber and Faber, 1954.) 279 pp. 25s.

The ritual approach to culture has been remarkable in the scholarly history of our time in the number of first-rate women it has turned up. The first full statement of the theory came in Jane Harrison's *Themis* in 1912; some of the earliest applications of the approach outside the field of classical studies were by women, Jessie Weston's *From Ritual to Romance* and Bertha Phillpotts' *The Elder Edda and Ancient Scandinavian Drama*, both in 1920; and currently in *The Gate of Horn* (1948) and *The Sword from the Rock* (1953), Gertrude Levy has been doing some of the richest scholarly reinterpretation we have. At the same time, the field of folk study has been haunted by moonstruck women with singleminded obsessions, from Katherine Thomas' *The Real Personages in Mother Goose* in 1930, with its absurd reading of nursery rhymes as hermetic political history, down to Flavia Anderson's *The Ancient Secret* in 1953, with its reduction of all myth and legend to a universal fire cult. Somewhere between the two, a serious and useful scholar with a tendency to fly off on a broomstick, Dr. Margaret Alice Murray has been working for a quarter of a century, and with the publication of her third book on her subject, some attempt to place her on the sense and non-sense scale may be warranted.

Trained in Egyptology under W. F. Flinders Petrie, Miss Murray suddenly turned from papyri and artifacts to comparative religion, what she called "a study in anthropology." In 1921 she published *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe* (parts of it had appeared in periodicals earlier), arguing with boldness and considerable brilliance that the ancient pagan religion of Western Europe, which she named "the Dianic cult," had survived alongside Christianity into modern times, and was persecuted by Christianity as "witchcraft." Her two books since on the Dianic cult say essentially the same thing, with the claim each time expanded to take in more history. The generally accepted contemporary view of witchcraft, resisted only by a few supernaturalists on the order of Montague Summers, had been that a lot of harmless old women were mistreated by religious fanaticism and mob hysteria, and the shock of *The Witch-Cult* on its appearance was its refutation of sceptics as well as believers, its naturalist argument for the historical *reality* of witchcraft. If there was no real Devil, she insisted, there nevertheless had been real witches who worshipped him, and the witch-burners, if not justified, had at least been fighting a real enemy.

Most of Miss Murray's evidence was drawn from the witch trials, and she stayed on solid ground wherever she could, even to an appendix by a professor of chemistry on the drugs in witch "flying ointments" that might have produced the sensation of flying. Her boldest venture into the history of personages and events was a closely-argued appendix on the trials of Joan of Arc and Gilles de Rais, proposing that they were, respectively, a witch and a wizard, and that their executions were voluntary sacrificial rites. Some of Miss Murray's operations in the book are dubious: there is a trans-

lation of "the government might have gone to the Devil" into "the government might have gone to the Earl of Bothwell" that has the fine Katherine Thomas stink; and there are traces of number jugglery to make all the witch covens come out with thirteen members, so that, when sixty-four witches are named at the Aberdeen trials, "of these, seven were merely mentioned as being known to the accused, though not as taking part in the ceremonies, and five were acquitted; thus leaving fifty-two persons, or four Covens." For the most part, however, the book is solid and scholarly, and its principal thesis, the reality of the witch cult, today seems almost undeniable.

The next installment of Miss Murray's revolution in intellectual history was *The God of the Witches* (1933), which essayed a history of her Dianic cult, as the worship of a horned god, from prehistoric times, identifying the horned dancer of Palaeolithic cave drawings with the Babylonian god Enkidu, the Cretan Minotaur, the Attic Tauriform Dionysos, the medieval St. Nicholas, and the English Herne (or "Hornie") the Hunter and Robin Hood with his horned cattle. Her most successful effort is the translation of myth into rite, showing, for example, that the folk tale motif of selling one's soul to the Devil for a fixed term of years is an obvious survival of the ritual scapegoat enjoying license until his time of sacrifice. Miss Murray puts some of her Egyptian material on ritual magic to brilliant use in *The God of the Witches*, and in general the book is the best and most substantial of her three on the subject. There are weak points: sometimes Miss Murray's credulity seems limitless, as when she assumes that her cult leaders wore gold and pearls because the Queen of the Fairies is so described in a witch trial; she has little passion for consistency, with the dwarfish Neolithic people who became her fairies of legend living on the downs and moors on one page, and hidden in the uplands on another; if something she expects is lacking in the evidence, the transcribers "dared not repeat the words."

Increasingly, however, Miss Murray's concern in the book seems to be not with ritual, the anonymous regular recurrence of the action, but with history, the single identifiable experience in time. Her fairies are thus not what her devils and witches were, myths based on the misunderstanding of timelessly recurrent cult rites, but a single knowable people in history, and the sort of knowledge we can get from the magic power of elf-bolts is that these dwarfish Neolithic hunters used poisoned arrows. Miss Murray's excursions into medieval European history become much bolder, and along with more material on Joan and Gilles as voluntary divine victims in the cult she now adds two new names, Thomas á Becket and William Rufus. Here again she makes an extremely convincing case, as Hugh Ross Williamson, an Anglican priest with unusual hobbies, showed when he amplified her account into a book on the ritual deaths of the archbishop and the king, *The Arrow and the Sword*, in 1947.

On other English history, *The God of the Witches* is less happy. The unlikely aetiological legend of the founding of the Order of the Garter by Edward III as a graceful gesture when a court lady dropped her garter is not likelier as a royal witch story, with the garter the badge of sacrificial chieftainship in the Dianic cult, Edward's rescue of it the assumption of "the position of the Incarnate God in the eyes of his Pagan subjects," and the Order itself twenty-six knights organized into two covens (Edward's mantle, decorated with 168 garters, with his own on his leg, thus con-

stituting thirteen more covens). When the book appeared, it must have seemed easy to dismiss the Garter Covens as a lively fancy of Miss Murray's, which decorated, without detracting from, a serious and substantial book.

* * * *

With the publication of *The Divine King in England* in 1954,¹ again like *The Witch-Cult*, subtitled "A Study in Anthropology," it is obvious, unfortunately, that lively fancy is the direction in which Miss Murray is going. Now the claim on English history is no less than that "at least once in every reign from William the Conqueror to James I the sacrifice of the Incarnate God was consummated either in the person of the king or in that of his substitute," generally in a regular seven-year cycle. On its publication, *The Divine King* ran into a storm of abuse from historians, who had been content to let Miss Murray argue the reality of witchcraft and the divinity that doth hedge a king in general, but felt that when she started making concrete statements about relatively modern English history it was time to direct her attentions back to Egypt. One of the English reviewers, Hugh Trevor-Roper (himself sufficiently credulous about history, whether in regard to Hitler or, in a recent *New Statesman*, Elijah "the mad mullah from the mountains of Gilead") is a fair example of what easy game she was for the historian. Trevor-Roper's review shows readily enough that her covens of thirteen involve considerable juggling, that her cycles of seven and its multiples get dates and even the intervals between two dates wrong, that such manipulations as the aged, ailing Wolsey constituting a "strong and healthy substitute victim" are self-contradictory, and that, fundamentally, she is so caught up in *The Golden Bough* that she "now sees England as the grove of Nemi."

Actually, *The Divine King in England* is even weaker than Trevor-Roper makes it. The book's tone is a tissue of "is strongly suggestive that," "for some reason not now explainable," "the remark may well imply," "these dates may be coincidental, but on the other hand they may be significant," "though the date does not fit . . . it is worth noting," "the whole course of events is peculiar and suggests that all the information is not forthcoming," "it can hardly be a coincidence that," "so much so that coincidence or accident can be ruled out." I imagine that Miss Murray would laugh at anyone who wrote about an Egyptian stratigraphy in that tone.

When her sacrifices have passed over into "judicial murder," on page 32, the victim's innocence and hot denial of the charge are essential to the cleansing quality of the rite, but on page 34, when Major Weir, like Gilles, confesses eagerly to every guilt, that fits even better. By counting cycles of seven years on two systems, one dated from the king's birth (the "personal" victim), and the other from his coronation (the "regal" victim), she has twice as much chance to make the dates work out. When the Earl of Somerset, in her view a chosen substitute victim for James I in his forty-ninth year (subdivision: personal), lives for thirty years longer, consider-

¹ Since then Miss Murray has published an approving introduction to *Witchcraft Today*, a book of absurd fakery by Gerald B. Gardner, who identifies himself as "Member of one of the ancient covens of the Witch Cult which still survive in England." Ironically, much of the "information" he confesses about their cult practices seems to originate in the researches and speculations in her book. Perhaps the case is really hopeless.

ably outliving the king, the ritual "follows the usual pattern of the Substitute Victim until the final act," when Somerset suffered "the living death of complete ostracism." The thirteen covens of witch-garters on the King's mantle come up again, now joined by two additional covens of garters on the collar of each knight. Not all of Miss Murray's researches into the chemistry of toad poison, one of her accepted methods for doing in the royal victim, can bring this down to real English earth.

The important argument against these Procrustean tactics is that they are so totally unnecessary. Along with her royal cult practices, Miss Murray furnishes a very different sort of evidence. Her story of the poisoning of King John by a monk in the Abbey of Swineshead, after a remark of the king's that if he lives bread will get dearer, suggests, as she says, that he was murdered because of fear that his powers of fertility were failing, but both the king and the monk could believe that the king's life and virility were bound up with the fortune of the harvests, without one being Voluntary Victim and the other Cult Executioner. If Clarence was drowned in a butt of Malmsey, everyone in England could have had a sense that the juice of the grape was a mythic libation of blood, without a single person's belonging to a British Dionysos cult (it is the inability to see this possibility, I think, that makes Miss Murray reluctant to credit the butt of Malmsey story).

Frequently Miss Murray balances a ritual and a political reason: if Anne of Cleves regarded Katherine Howard as "the destined victim," she also represented a party of politicians who wanted Katherine out of the way. If you have the second reason, one would think, you do not need an underground movement for the first; symbolic overtones will serve very well. One of Miss Murray's appendices lists the thirteen noblemen and bishops who signed the deed of gift of England to the Pope, but surely if "coincidence or accident can be ruled out," thirteen is a logical number for such a deed because of Christ and the Apostles; these nobles and clergy do not have to be a coven of witches. The Order of the Garter might choose thirteen or a multiple on the basis of the same association, as we presume that the jury system did (does Miss Murray suggest that every jury is a coven of secret Dianic worshippers?), and all the talk of "the secret power of the Royal Coven" or "the greatest of all covens—the Order of the Garter" can go quietly out the window.

Miss Murray's trouble is that although she knows so much, and thinks so fruitfully, she does not actually understand, or she has forgotten over a quarter of a century, the important distinctions between ritual, myth, and history. Finding something to be the "essence" of the situation, she seeks for it not in the ancient "origin," the ritual underlying the myth, but in history, the unique "event." There is no reason to doubt her survivals of the Old Religion into modern times, into our own time, certainly; the English crown is full of ancient magic, as the coronation of Elizabeth II reminded us all recently. The question is the form in which they survive. As the ancient rites die out in literal practice, as the king or a surrogate is no longer physically killed, their misunderstood and transformed record passes into myth and symbol, and in that form they seem to survive almost indefinitely. In a culture where the king was once slain every seven years, the king and his subjects may very well feel an ominousness about each seventh anniversary (of life or reign or anything), and may even feel a symbolic fitness, a new strength and rebirth, if the king or a powerful figure who

seems innocent dies, but the step from that to the idea that therefore he is a cult member, deliberately slain and choosing to be slain, is the unnecessary step.

The ancient rites die, their myths transform and color history, but they are not themselves the events of history (as they transform and color literature and a great deal of our culture without turning it into the Bloody Wood). The ritual theorist can say that rite was the origin of the forms of our culture and remains its essence, without following Miss Murray in saying that events in modern history originate in modern ritual performance. The murdered figure of Lincoln took on some features of the myth of the Dying God, in turn derived from ancient rite, because these symbolic and emotional weightings float freely in the culture; putting Lincoln and Booth into the White House Coven only turns all our hard-earned sense into nonsense.

North Bennington, Vermont

Stanley Edgar Hyman

FOLKTALE AND LEGEND

The Palm-Wine Drinkard. By Amos Tutuola. (New York: Grove Press, 1953.) 130 pp.

In this novel the hero's insatiable thirst for palm wine—he would drink 150 kegs of it every day before two o'clock in the afternoon—causes him to employ a tapster whose sole duty is to supply him with this drink from his palm-tree farm, which is nine miles square and contains 560,000 palm trees. When the tapster falls from a palm tree, dies, and goes to Deads' Town, where everyone walks backward, the hero's only recourse is to go in search of him in order to restore him to his former position. The novel is a humorous account of the daring adventures and hair-breadth escapes of the hero (known as "Father of gods who could do anything in this world") and of his wife on their ten-year journey to Deads' Town and their return home. The tapster is not permitted to return to the land of the "alives," however, but gives the hero an egg which, when immersed in a bowl of water, will cause him to receive anything he might wish in this world.

The experiences of the hero and his wife on their journey to and from Deads' Town are drawn almost entirely from myths and folk tales well known to the Yoruba people of Nigeria, British West Africa. Amos Tutuola, a Yoruba of Abeokuta, has, no doubt, been hearing these tales since his early childhood, for the telling of stories is by no means a lost art among the Yoruba. Nearly every child, not to mention the professionals and other adults, has a large repertory of them. Three of these Yoruba tales, which also appear in the novel, will be sufficient here for the purpose of this review:

1. Among the Yoruba a familiar tale called *Omogbirin*¹ "Beautiful Child" is essentially the same story as that of "The Complete Gentleman Reduced to a Skull," which is related in the early sections of the novel.
2. In a long Yoruba narrative called *The Brave Hunter in the Dense Forest of the Spirits*, there is an account of a mother who bore a child from her thumb. From the day of its birth it could talk and possessed great

¹ The symbol o represents the sound of *aw* in English *law*.

strength. Yoruba women today frequently laugh when they see a man with a swollen thumb and jokingly caution him to handle it with care.

3. Near the end of the novel the causes of a famine are given. Land and Heaven go to the bush to hunt for animals and are able to catch only a mouse. When Land does not consent to Heaven's having the mouse, Heaven becomes angry and stops the rain from falling to the earth, thus causing a famine. To appease Heaven and to acknowledge its superiority to Land, the people offer a sacrifice of fowls, kola nuts, and palm oil but have difficulty in finding someone to carry it to Heaven. Finally, one of the king's slaves is chosen to deliver it. He does so; the rain falls forthwith; and on the slave's return to the earth he is drenched by the rain because the people are afraid to admit him to their homes. They fear that he will carry them to Heaven as he had done the sacrifice. This myth is almost identical with one called "Why the Vulture's Head is Bald." Here God and Earth go hunting and catch only a rat, which Earth keeps for itself. When God becomes angry, a diviner of Ifa advises Earth to sacrifice the rat and send it to God. All the birds except Vulture promptly refuse to take it. Vulture delivers the sacrifice and God gives him specific instructions, which he carefully follows, and the rain falls in torrents. On his return to Earth in the rain, the other birds drive him from their homes by pounding on his head. "It is for this reason," says the narrator, "that the head of Vulture is bald until this very day."

The beautiful melodies appearing at intervals throughout this myth and the skill with which the plot is constructed make it an unusually interesting story. Though such melodies do not appear in the novel, they are common in Yoruba and other West African tales. They are only serve to relieve the tension of the action but also summarize events already related and motivate future ones.

From the very beginning of *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* the author has constructed his plot in such a way that he is able to string together as many of these myths as he desires and still produce an interesting and unified narrative regardless of the fact that in some other context these same stories might be quite unrelated. The novel reveals a curious mixture of elements of West African and European cultures. Many of the comparisons illustrate this, and the incongruities resulting therefrom supply much of the humor. For example, when the future wife of the hero is imprisoned in the home of the Skulls and attempts to escape, the Skulls rush out to the place where she sits on a bull-frog and roll on the ground "as if a thousand petrol drums were pushing along a hard road." Later we are told that the hero's child, whom his wife bore from her thumb, had a voice "as plain as if somebody [struck] an anvil with a steel hammer"; and when the child was burned to death, there arose from the ashes a half-bodied baby who talked "with a lower voice like a telephone." On a journey through the bush the hero and his wife found boa-constrictors as "uncountable as sand"; they passed through a wide field that was cleared like a football field; at the home of the Faithful-Mother in the White Tree, they were given cigarettes; and on their homeward journey they were thrown into a bag and carried off in company with creatures who were as "cold as ice" and as "hairy and sharp as sand-paper," and whose language sounded like a church bell.

Numerous customs of the Yoruba people in particular and of West Africans in general are in evidence throughout the novel. Among these are

the offering of sacrifices to bring an end to a famine, belief in magic, the use of herbs, the institution of polygamy, the wife's dying in order that she may accompany her husband to another world, a girl's revolt against the parent's choice of a husband for her, the return of the dead, belief in spirits, the Yoruba conception of the hereafter, references to African markets, foods, petty trading, and native courts, communal labor, the practice of one person's serving another in lieu of the payment of money borrowed, the carrying of heavy objects on the head, and the important place given to dancing, singing, and drumming.

To say that the language employed in this novel is simple English is not entirely accurate. It is, rather, "Yorubanized" English. The author has retained many of his native Yoruba constructions which he translates into English, usually word for word. This will explain why to a native speaker of English the language of this novel appears strange and unidiomatic. A few examples will illustrate his methods:

1. *To walk with our back* (p. 96), meaning "to walk backward," is taken from the Yoruba expression *fehinrin* "to use the back to walk."

2. *To walk with our face* (p. 96), meaning "to walk forward," is borrowed from the Yoruba *rin siwaju* "to walk to the front of the face."

3. *When the eyes of all . . . were on our knees* (p. 75), meaning "in olden times," is a translation of the Yoruba expression *nigbati oju wa lorikun* "in very remote times" (literally, "when eyes were on the knees").

4. The sentence *his head was bigger than his body ten times* (p. 47), meaning "his head was ten times as big as his body," retains the Yoruba word order, as in "his head was big, surpasses the body ten times."

5. *A place which was built in the form of a premises by these creatures with mud* (p. 38) shows the Yoruba word order, which requires that the phrase *with mud* should end the sentence.

6. In the sentence *his both arms were at his both thighs* (p. 56), the use of *both* for *two* is due to the fact that in Yoruba there is not one word meaning "both" and another meaning "two." The term *meji* or *mejeji* has to serve for the English *both* and *two*. The author happened to select the wrong English equivalent.

7. In *a various bush* (p. 55), he had a choice between the two Yoruba words *omiran* and *yato*, both of which mean "various" or "different." He again chose the wrong English equivalent.

8. In the sentence *he [the father] gave her to a man for himself* (p. 18), meaning "he, himself, gave her to a man," the author has translated the Yoruba idiom word for word.

9. Finally, in the sentence *I would jealous him* (p. 25), meaning "I would be envious of him," the author has converted the English adjective *jealous* into a verb, making it the equivalent of the Yoruba descriptive verb *lara*, meaning "to be envious of."

The Palm-Wine Drinkard makes delightful reading for both young and old. The author's unidiomatic English, the preciseness of his references to time and distances, and his good-humored exaggerations, which are always tempered by his extreme care in recording the most trivial details of action, character, and scene, give to the novel a genial sort of humor of which the reader never tires.

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Lorenzo D. Turner

Indian Legends of the Pacific Northwest. Ella E. Clark. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1953.) Illustrated by Robert Bruce Inverarity.

Miss Clark forearms herself against the cavils of specialists by announcing, in her Introduction, an approach never "sociological or anthropological." She has assembled over a hundred tales from Oregon and Washington tribes; one quarter from ethnological collections, one quarter from informants, and half from writings and MSS of early missionaries, travelers, army officers, etc. The book is admittedly not representative of the whole range of Pacific Northwest oral literature: ". . . my chief purpose has been to prepare a collection of Pacific Northwest myths and legends that the general reader will enjoy, either as entertainment or as information about an American way of living strange to him." The result is a book almost entirely oriented around topography and natural phenomena, and consisting for the most part of short local legends and explanatory tales. The remaining selections are Coyote-Transformer myths, a few dangerous-being tales, two versions of the Star-Husband, and other inoffensive tales. *Indian Legends* is organized in five sections: "Myths of the Mountains"; "Legends of the Lakes"; "Tales of the Rivers, Rocks, and Waterfalls"; "Myths of Creation, the Sky, and Storms"; and "Miscellaneous Myths and Legends." The contributing tribes are almost equally divided between Interior and Coast groups, the Yakima leading with eight tales, and the Quileute represented by seven. The rest—thirty-six tribes—average two or three tales apiece. There are fifteen tales in the book for which no tribe is listed, and five specified as "various tribes." The book is provided with a bibliography, glossary, and source notes.

Given her five categories, and the fact that this collection is made along geographical rather than cultural lines, Miss Clark has succeeded in creating a surprisingly well-integrated book. By means of headnotes and introductory passages to the five sections, she establishes the basic unity of Raven, Coyote, Kwatec, and Bluejay as "Changers," and manages to minimize the cultural differences between Coast and Plateau tribes. She has re-written most of the tales, imparting a unity of style to the collection. Miss Clark tends to enlarge some on the original sources, and (as in her version of the Snohomish tale, "Why Rivers Flow but One Way") inserting material not in the listed source to give the various tales more cohesion. One gets the feeling, especially in the first half of the book, that "The Great Spirit" appears too frequently—but this can probably be accounted for by the fact that her local legends are largely derived from earlier, non-anthropological sources that romanticized Indian folklore. Although there may be some danger in exposing the general reader to such a quantity of questionable source-material, perhaps the greatest value of this book for the folklorist is that it does bring together a variety of minor tales from neglected and obscure sources, providing a basis for comparison with the standard ethnological collections.

Just how much the general reader will actually enjoy this book is another question. I cannot believe that even natives of the Pacific Northwest would prefer dozens of small anecdotes about local mountains and lakes to a few of the highly imaginative supernatural—and animal-marriage tales of the type Miss Clark has entirely omitted. Furthermore, the reader with some

interest in literature cannot help but be confused when he discovers a Modoc myth on the supernatural origin of the Indians under "Mountains" because it mentions Mt. Shasta *en passant*, or a Klamath version of the Coyote monster-killing (by being swallowed) tale among "Tales of the Rivers, Rocks, and Waterfalls" because this particular monster happens to live in the Columbia. For Miss Clark—an English teacher at Washington State College, and a person presumably scrupulous about matters of terminology in English literature—to title her first three sections entirely for alliterative effect, seems highly capricious.

One cannot expect, granted the present attitude of the Postal Authorities, that the best of Pacific Northwest oral literature, with its Rabelaisian-Dadaist overtones, could be presented to the general public. But we should look forward to the time when an anthology of Northwest Coast literature, organized along culture-area rather than geographical lines, and making some attempt to separate *genres* and delineate styles, will be made available to intelligent readers: one containing the full wit, bite, and dash of the original versions. Radin's *Winnegabo Hero Cycles*, Boas' *Tsimshian Mythology*, Reichard's *Analysis of Coeur d'Alene Myths*, and Dell Skeels' excellent unpublished dissertation on Nez Percé oral literature (University of Washington) are all usable groundwork for such a book. It is a shame Miss Clark did not make some application of them.

Berkeley, California

G. S. Snyder

AREA STUDIES

Folk Travelers. Mody C. Boatright, Wilson M. Hudson, and Allen Maxwell, editors. (Dallas: The Texas Folklore Society and Southern Methodist University Press, 1953.) 257 pp. \$4.00.

Well, the Texas Folklore Society has done it again. *Folk Travelers* is number twenty-five in the well-known Texas series. Its general motif is that ballads, tales, anecdotes, and all the other folk stuff travel from time to time and place to place. This theme, which will not come as a surprise to folklorists, is sung in nineteen cantos beginning with some general recollections by J. Frank Dobie to the effect that yarns get passed around. Most of the collection is good fare for public consumption, particularly for the salad circuit, but only a few of the articles will give the folklorist much nourishment.

The volume is well worth having, however, for such articles as Joseph W. Hendron's "Bonny Barbara Allen," which is a good summary of studies of texts and motifs, particularly tracing the American influences on the sweet old thing. Noteworthy also are articles by George W. Hendricks, "The Names of Western Wild Animals," and Robert C. Stephenson, "The Western Ballad and the Russian *Ballade*," and "Signature in Ballad and Story." Stephenson follows the thesis that

Folk tales are preserved by professionals, artists of the spoken and acted word who are esteemed as such by the people. This is a fact that would have been recognized sooner, except that the professional always looked like someone or something else, like a cobbler, a tramp, a nursemaid or any other member of his own audience; in other words, like a mere amateur

of his art. What made him a professional, in his own estimation and in the eyes of the audience, was nothing in his economic or social status, but simply his talent and the authority of his performance.

He points out how the folk artist frequently stamps his identity upon his materials by naming himself or someone else who may give identity and hence plausibility to the narrative. More suggestive than explicit, Stephenson leaves it to the reader to fill in the many examples that come to mind to document this trait.

Of more local and limited interest are Elizabeth Hurley on Southern street cries, Orlean L. Sawey on origins of cattle brands in Uvalde County, and a short collection of devil stories from the Big Bend country by Elton R. Miles. John L. and Stella A. Sinclair have found a contemporary Uncle Remus in the person of Richard Smith, a dairy worker and teller of animal stories. Recorded and transcribed, their "Richard's Tales" shows a real "Onct upon a time—" artist at work.

The instructor in beginning folklore courses who wishes to show his students how good folklore may be in the making today and may be found close by if the eye and ear can be trained to detect it will find an article by James Howard very much to the point. It is a collection of tales of Neiman-Marcus, the fabulous specialty store in Dallas. Eccentric customers, unorthodox requests, incredible transactions, and the far-famed luxury merchandise itself all go into the making of the Neiman-Marcus legend. If there is such a thing as folklore that is modern and fresh, this is it.

The articles in this volume show the variety both in scope and quality that has characterized the whole series by the Texas Folklore Society. It is worth the price to both the folklorist and the casual reader.

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Hector Lee

Literary Folklore of the Hispanic Southwest. By Aurora Lucero-White Lea. (San Antonio, Texas: The Naylor Company, 1953.) xv+247 pp. \$3.50.

This miscellany of Spanish folklore from northern New Mexico includes such types of traditional lore as drama, ballads, folktales, a few sayings and folkways, most of which has already appeared in the publications of professional folklorists. The discussion which precedes each of these captions is interesting, particularly to the layman who may not be acquainted with the traditions of New Mexico, but nothing particularly new has been added by the author.

The format of the book leaves a good deal to be desired; the material could have been set up in much more attractive fashion and more carefully edited to avoid such errors as the inclusion of materials which do not appear listed in the table of contents. On page 75 is given the text of a play entitled *Auto del Santo Niño* which obviously is a version of *El Niño Perdido* discussed earlier on page 15, but both titles are omitted in the table of contents.

Mrs. Lea has attempted to place her materials within the framework of history, a plan which more carefully followed would have resulted in a very effective publication, but unfortunately she moves indiscriminately

between the product of urbanized society and folk culture. Constant reference to the lavish splendor of the life of the so-called *ricos* of colonial New Mexico does not constitute folklore. Mrs. Lea's contention that the "half-breeds and Indians" simply emulated the habits of the wealthy and consequently did not carry down the folk traditions of New Mexico is not borne out by history. Quite the contrary is true; the humble folk are the ones who have continued traditional practices because they had no other norm to follow. Furthermore, one cannot generalize on the basis of material whose sources and informants are not mentioned. Mrs. Lea has failed to distinguish between the practices of urbanized society and the traditions of a folk culture, consequently these two groups are confused and in the end the author fails to give a true picture of the function of folklore.

It is interesting to learn that the people in New Mexico speak the Castilian of the principal authors of Spain's Golden Age. The statement is difficult to accept unless it can be authenticated. There are very interesting archaisms in New Mexico which add flavor to the language spoken there, but a few expressions here and there do not constitute the language of Cervantes.

In the chapter on Folkways the author is again carried away by her account of splendorous living among the *ricos* and falls short of the mark because little of the actual folkways is presented. For example, in speaking of the traditional wedding ceremonies Mrs. Lea omitted such essentials as the formal *pedimiento* which is still practiced in some of the smaller villages. Moreover, she fails to mention such important practices as the *prendorio*, and the *entrega de novios* usually performed by the village troubadour. Further details in connection with weddings are the *plazo*, *granjeo*, *arras*, etc., just to mention a few.

Again in speaking of baptisms no mention is made of the *canastilla* or layette which folk custom ordained before the war that it not exceed a total of \$15.00. Likewise, the gratuity given to children at weddings and baptisms when they call for "Pastilla!" in northern New Mexico, or "Bolo!" in the south, is omitted. The latter is a derivative from *óbolo*, a Greek coin equivalent to about fourteen centimes of a Spanish *peseta*. Mrs. Lea mentions about one half of the verses recited when the god parents return the baptized infant to their parents. The god parents recite:

"Aguí le traigo esta flor
Que de la iglesia salió,
Con el santo sacramento
Y el agua que recibíó."

The parents in accepting their child answer:

"Recíbote prenda hermosa
Que de la iglesia saliste,
Con los santos sacramentos
Y el agua que recibiste."

In closing, the book is misnamed. From the title one would expect to find folk materials from the Southwest, and all of it is from northern New Mexico, in some cases from a single county. It is simply a case of covering too much territory. This does not detract from the value of the folklore presented in the book. As far as the content is concerned, it is authentic and valuable, except that the author failed to relate it properly to the

people who produced it and ignored her sources completely by not giving even the names of the informants. The book is not without merit, but it needs to be properly organized and better presented.

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Arthur L. Campa

The People Called Shakers: A Search for the Perfect Society. Edward Deming Andrews. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953.) 309 pp. \$6.00.

The recovery of America's past is a fact of current intellectual history portentous with dangers no less than salutary with promise. The situation in American literature is archetypal. Mr. T. S. Eliot is the law-giver of those who deny that a usable tradition can be found in a history like ours which has destroyed traditional authority in religion, philosophy, politics and social organization. For them, the recovery of what America has destroyed is the desideratum. Wonderfully, however, another group, of whom F. O. Matthiessen and Richard Chase come to mind, while owing much to Mr. Eliot in method have recovered from our past shining evidence that our destruction of authoritarian tradition made possible the construction of an original culture which has the seminal and disciplinary uses of a tradition.

They make Mr. Eliot's royalism, if not also his classicism and Anglicanism, quaint. In the folk arts the danger is present that searchers of our past who are unconscious of ultimate implications seize precisely upon the quaint, go all silly reviving it, and raise a fearful chirp against the least essential aspects of modern industrialism. Industrialists with a hobby of historical misunderstanding like Henry Ford have gilded the movement. This is not so ironic as it seems because misunderstanding of the past is certainly a solid foundation for misunderstanding of the present.

Watching the spread of historical somnambulism from Dearborn, Williamsburg, Sturbridge, Central City, Salem Village, Old Deerfield and the rest to the "antique" designs perpetrated by do-it-yourself magazines, "folk" schools, abandoned farm "agrarianism" and onwards to guaranteed-phony "country" stores and the handmade "look" in industrial products, it is a relief to find that Edward D. Andrews, the chief authority on the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Coming, or Shakers, whose story reeks quaintness, is no folk-monger but a true historian. Still it must be recorded sadly that the new Shaker Museum at Chatham, New York, considers this latest book containing the whole history too "serious" for visitors to its shop of near-Shaker "craft" objects and books to match.

Mr. Andrews' virtue is that he not only recovers Shaker history from oblivion but rescues the integrity of Shaker experience from folksy admirers of Shaker chairs. His 1937 book written with Faith Andrews, *Shaker Furniture: The Craftsmanship of an American Communal Sect*, bodes forth the organic unity between the Shakers' religio-communal system and their furniture designs. No less a modernist designer than Richard Neutra in his recent magisterial book, *Survival through Design*, affirming that design is human destiny, confirms the implication of the Andrews that the arts of the Shakers cannot be revived without reviving their way of life.

Only after deep studies of Shaker community industries, music, dances and rituals, besides their furniture, has Mr. Andrews attempted the present general history. It is an absorbing story not very different from other Second Reformation radical sects in its beginnings among obscure God-intoxicated English and American folk. The fact that the Shakers really lived up to their program of celibacy, community of property and, hour by hour for more than a century, "Hands to work and hearts to God," while similar groups produced by hand or heart little or nothing of value and dissolved quickly, is thoroughly documented in this book. Our eyes are opened to see a Shaker chair as much more than a chair: it is an objective correlative of a particular socio-spiritual reality.

Just as we can *know* ancient Egypt by looking at a pyramid as Herman Melville did, writing "The vast plane. No wall, no roof. Its simplicity confounds you. It refuses to be studied or adequately comprehended. A dead calm of masonry," so we can know the important things about the Shakers by looking at their creations with historical imagination. This Mr. Andrews greatly helps us to do. The strange thing is that historically perceived their products are not quaint. Mr. Andrews' recovery of the Shaker synergism ends the wish that we could recover their crafts while eschewing their celibacy, communitarianism and millennial theology; but it encourages us to pursue the path of Neutra towards our own destiny.

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Basil Rauch

Readings in Ukrainian Folklore, ed. J. B. Rudnyc'kyj, Winnipeg, University of Manitoba Press, 1951. Pp. 32, \$.50.

Readings in Russian Folklore, ed. J. B. Rudnyc'kyj, Winnipeg, University of Manitoba Press, 1952. Pp. 33, \$.50.

Readings in Polish Folklore, ed. J. B. Rudnyc'kyj, Winnipeg, University of Manitoba Press, 1953. Pp. 32, \$.50.

These pamphlets fill a real need for readings in the Slavic folklores. All are similar in plan, attempting to give a small number of representative selections from various genres of the folk literatures treated. The volume on Russian folklore contains notes explaining the more difficult words. Such a section is lacking for the Ukrainian and Polish volumes, but the editor promises to prepare "a critical commentary to these texts as well as a vocabulary."

Though the texts have been prepared for use in general language courses, they could profitably be used as illustrative material for more specialized courses in Slavic folklore. The editor is generally to be commended for the quality of the selections (he has avoided the temptation to include "popular literature," composed paraphrases, etc.), as well as for their typical quality and variety. A few omissions might be remarked. The Russian volume contains only a few lyric songs, with such important types as the love lyric and the "family" songs completely omitted. Of the various types of Russian narrative songs, there are a number of *byliny*, but no historical songs proper, religious epics, or ballads, all important genres in the Russian tradition. The Ukrainian volume lacks the *kolomyjki*, short dancing songs somewhat like the

Russian *chastushki*, and extremely popular today. In general, however, the selections are well balanced, extending even to such specialized forms as laments and incantations.

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W. E. Harkins

FOLK ART

The Folk Arts of Norway. Janice S. Stewart. (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1953). 246 pp. \$10.00.

Scandinavian art is much in evidence of late, with one exhibition of old Viking crafts touring Europe and another of modern Scandinavian design visiting museums in the United States and Canada. In addition, there was published in 1953 this handsome volume, one of the first full-length books to describe in English the peasant arts of Norway as they have enriched its households from Viking to modern times.

The book deals mostly with the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries, when Norwegian arts were influenced first by a belated Renaissance, then by the contemporary baroque, rococo, and neo-classic styles, these through trade entering Norway's seaport towns from the Continent south, or crossing the border from Sweden, and spreading to the nearer communities. In the isolated mountain and valley regions, however, traditions even of the mediaeval Romanesque and Gothic periods occasionally lasted on well into the 19th century, and it would be difficult to define any given historical art "style" as having prevailed simultaneously in all areas of Norway. Devotees of romanticism in the 19th century began the conscious preservation of Norwegian folk arts as historic documents and revived the practice of earlier handicrafts. Norway's fine folk museums, such as that at Bygdøy near Oslo, present to us today these buildings and home arts of the past. Mrs. Stewart points out the fact that much of Norway's peasant art was probably bought up and taken out of the country by visitors from other lands before this interest developed, and is therefore widely scattered; and much remains to be done in locating and classifying these objects, as well as in studying the arts of Norwegian Lapland and the western islands.

The first two chapters give a concise history of Norway from the Stone Age to modern times, stressing the geographical, social and economic factors which influenced rural life and arts. There are descriptions and illustrations of the marvelously patterned finds of the migration period, of the interlacing ornament of objects found in the Viking Oseberg burial ship, and of the curiously pagan-Christian stave churches with their tiers of dragon-headed gables. Especially interesting are the sections describing the land-owning farmers of Norway, their houses and household furnishings. The construction of the carefully trimmed log walls of house and loft, the development of fireplace and chimney, the tables, cupboards, and stools with their carved and painted decoration, are presented as the setting in which the home crafts of the farmer and his family added warmth and beauty to objects of daily use. These sections form an excellent introduction for the more specialized chapters which follow.

Technical and stylistic aspects of carving, *rosemaling* (flower painting in oils on wood), metalwork, weaving, embroidery, and costume are then de-

scribed in turn, each being put through its paces as it reveals the Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance, baroque, rococo, and occasionally neo-classic styles; in each field, too, Mrs. Stewart describes the distinguishing characteristics peculiar to various regions of Norway, and this is geographically facilitated for the reader by the inclusion inside the book's cover of a large regional map of the southern part of the country. Technical descriptions include methods of weaving and of doing silver filigree work; an old quotation of a recipe for mixing paint colors; the tools used in various types of wood carving.

In the chapter on carving, the Gothic rosette, which had replaced earlier Romanesque vines, interlacing animal patterns, and intertwined ribbons, gave way to Renaissance panelling, pilasters, and more naturalistic vine and foliage designs. We find chests, ale-bowls, tankards, mangle-boards, butter boxes, and such typically western Norwegian forms as the drinking vessels, the *staup* and the *kjenge* with their distinctive handles. Some of these pieces were decorated with chip or flat carving, and some had their designs burned into the wood with a hot poker, while others were embellished with painted decoration. The baroque style with its deep acanthus-leaf carving is effectively illustrated by the lush *döleskurd*, the incredibly rich scrolling on a cupboard from Gudbrandsdal, while the picture on the facing page shows another cupboard carved in the lighter, asymmetrical fancy of the rococo.

The 17th and 18th centuries constituted a period when, as the author says, the vital quality of old Viking art was revived, most particularly in *rosemaling*, which had its counterparts in the folk arts of so many other countries. Never dull nor merely imitative, Norwegian art took to its foreign influences in a lively way, "with here some picture painting similar to that used in Sweden, there tulip motifs from the Dutch and German baroque, and in another place, the scroll-like motifs from French rococo, but always the designs have a strongly Norwegian air." This most recent of techniques among Norwegian peasant arts began around 1700 and developed its own local styles, the "graceful, elongated leaf forms, and dainty flowers on long stems" of Telemark, the "blazing contrast of red and yellow" of Hallingdal; but whatever the regional manifestations, surely the color combinations, "the flamboyant and the somber," as illustrated in the color plates, stand out as particularly attractive features of Norwegian rose painting. These richly scrolling baroque and rococo forms, transposed from nature and set down in color schemes which depend for their effect now upon close shades of a single color, now upon violent contrasts between opposing hues, do indeed recapture in spirit the imaginative vigor of the Viking arts of earlier days.

Styles from abroad had their influence upon Norwegian metalwork, from iron door-and-chest hardware to the finest silver filigree jewelry. Early Byzantine patterns had brought an exotic Oriental flavor to decorative jewelry, such as the dangles which hung from breastpins, or the buttons, buckles, belt-plates and pendants which played so important a part in native dress. Styles from the south came to Norway too with the many Germans who were workers in the rich silver mines of Kongsberg. Itinerant smiths took these styles to more remote communities. In Norway as in most other countries the wearing of silver jewelry was an indication of one's wealth and position as well as a method of keeping silver within reach at a time when there were no banks.

Weaving and embroidery, as well as the costumes which Mrs. Stewart describes in her last chapter, exhibit distinctly local characters as much as do carving and rose painting; for example a blue-green color popular in Glomdal painting reappears as a favorite color in the woven textiles of that region. Tapestries, from mediaeval religious "picture" hangings to more geometrically devised pieces, heavy rugs and coverlets, pillow-cases, braid for trimming costumes, and borders with drawn-work or whitework, as well as the more recent knitted sweaters and stockings, all display the high quality of handwork done by Norwegian women. They endowed their articles of daily use with a tasteful and vigorous use of pattern, either naturalistic or stylized, and of color, either somber or gay. Many of the illustrations show similarities between local types of *rosesaum* (rose embroidery) and their counterparts in the *rosemaling* of the same region—patterns so close and fat in Hallingdal, so freely flowing in Telemark. The final chapter on costume brings together the combinations of weaving, embroidery, and jewelry which make up regional dress, varying again according to the region's proximity to or distance from centers of Continental fashion.

Mrs. Stewart does not claim to have made a complete study of all Norwegian folk art, but it is to be regretted that there is no mention of pottery, nor any reason given for its omission. Norway's folk museums do exhibit pieces which are close in style to the lead-glazed earthenwares of other European countries in the 18th and 19th centuries, with comparable slip-decoration, sgraffito (scratched designs), earthy colors of brown, green, and yellow, and finally those internationally beloved motifs for pottery decoration, the tulip and the bird. (Examples of this pottery are illustrated in a book by Hans Dedekam, *Gammel Trøndersk Pottemakerkunst*, Trondhjem, Nordenfjeldske Kunstindustrimuseum, 1926.) This simply decorated folk pottery is not to be confused with the witty, exuberantly rococo blue or purple decorated tin-enameled productions of the more sophisticated factory of Herrebøe, although the rural pottery has in common with the urban a most attractive loveliness. Perhaps the omission of pottery as a folk art from this book, as from many of the Norwegian books on the peasant arts of that country, is due to the great preponderance and distinctively native character of Norway's utensils in wood.

Factual descriptions of techniques and regional differences in styles have been carefully and, it appears, accurately worked out (although in the chapter on embroidery the German painter, Holbein, is referred to as Dutch). The author's points are clearly made, technical descriptions are easily comprehensible, and the book is written in an interesting and readable style. Several delightful inscriptions and verses on ale-bowls and accounts of some superstitions, for example those concerning silver, add entertaining bits which suggest local customs and uses. The bibliography consists mostly of Norwegian references and Mrs. Stewart's preface gives credit to a number of Norwegians and Americans for assistance in correcting her manuscript and selecting the photographs. Her index is excellently arranged for ready reference. Five lovely color plates of *rosemaling* designs and a hundred and fifty-two black and white illustrations of the various media described are handsomely and conveniently arranged within the text, while the linen binding are fine quality of paper add to the general attractiveness of the volume.

Aside from having an obvious interest for those of Norse descent and for those interested in the folk arts, this book would make an admirable

addition to libraries and to history of art or design schools. To the individual designer or handcraft student, the technical descriptions and exposition of the rich colors and varied forms of Norwegian folk arts should be most useful. And the first-time traveler to Norway would surely benefit from reading this book as advance preparation for his visit. Mrs. Stewart's enthusiasm for her subject is contagious, and the illustrations themselves seem to suggest that the common denominator to be found in the best of Norwegian folk art is that very quality of enjoyment, expressed in the interlacing patterns of Viking jewelry, in the deeply shadowed richness of baroque wood-carving, or in the springing vines and blossoming roses embroidered on costumes or painted on bowls.

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FOLK DANCES

European Folk Dance. Joan Lawson. (London: Pitman Publishing Corp., 1953.) Illustrated by Iris Brooke. xii+244 pp. \$8.50.

The handsome volume on *European Folk Dance* by Joan Lawson must be judged with reference to its purpose, aegis, and date of publication. These obvious premises for evaluation apply to this work most obviously, because of the pretentiousness and contemporaneity. It includes the whole of European folk dance, in the first part ritual dance and the "people's origins, character, lives, customs, and traditions" (viii), in the second part many examples of popular folk dances, together with an analysis of their characteristics and associated musical features. The book is published under the auspices of the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing, Incorporated, whose National Dance Branch Committee have authorized this work as the official text-book for the examination syllabus of their Branch. The author is described as "exceptionally well qualified for her task, being a critic of *The Dancing Times*, a lecturer for the Sadler's Wells School and the Dalcroze Society Inc., and a member of the International Folk Music Council." (Dust jacket). It was "First published 1953" and evidently anticipates more editions.

Thus it is heralded as the much-needed, scholarly work compiling choreographic forms available in scattered sources and combining their analysis with other cultural aspects. Is it this great work?

The plan looks promising. It shows that the author is abreast with contemporary perception of the function of dance as well as its form. In Part I, "The Development of European Folk Dance," she pushes back into pre-history for origins and for a theory of the development of dance patterns; she considers the effects of climate, geography, and costume on dance style. In Part II, "National Characteristics," she progresses from East to West according to linguistic divisions and treats dances of the Middle East and the Turki-Tartars, the Greeks, the Slavs, the Alpine People, the Teutons, the Celts, the Finno-Ugrians, the Latins, the Basques (two of which are explained as non-linguistic categories). In each chapter she connects the national characteristics with historical background, then proceeds to the choreographies. For the most part she describes fundamental steps; at times she combines them into a complete dance sequence. Though she uses the

verbal method, she has aligned the texts with the music which is printed vertically on the left side of the page, and with eloquent stick-figures (pin-men in British) lined up with the corresponding measures. She uses neither dance script nor diagrams of floor plans. At times the vertical measure or two of music is reprinted in a horizontal position—hardly necessary—at times the complete song follows the choreography—very useful. The stick figures and music give the book a professional air, for they are distinguished feats of draftsmanship. (Their authorship has to be dug out of the Acknowledgments, respectively, John Bancroft and, I believe, Frank Howes). Meticulous costume drawings, two maps, three appendices of dance locations, modern compositions on folk dance music, and a small bibliography, finally two indices, complete a well-rounded setup and whet the folklorist's appetite for the text.

The Preface opens with some well-worn anecdotes. The first chapter garbles Curt Sachs' evolutionary classification, with no more acknowledgment than "have been roughly classified as —." The third page states a theory of origin in terms of a fact, not as hypothesis. "The extraordinarily large number of European point and hilt, long and short Sword, and Maypole Dances, and other May-day and Lent festivals in which Jack-in-the-Green figures, are relics of the ancient tree-worshipping rituals practised by the first settlers in the enormous forests that once covered Europe. The tree provided these primitive men with their sole means of existence. Its fruit and leaves served as food. Perched in its branches, they were provided with some sort of shelter from the elements and protected from the wild beasts who continually prowled below." This must be a temporary aberration! Let's leave the rest of this page till we are in a stronger frame of mind. Now on the next page we come across the Romanian Calusari. The author here misses the point, but she does give some reliable facts. On page 7 she derives some ballet dance terms from animal dances. Here surely she is on firm ground! Yet even here the *cabriole* is derived from a horse step. On page 9 we see a good technical term, "whiffling"—the sound made by flashing swords. Eagerly we read on and are told that war dances grew out of herdsmen's need for new land.

Now we really need some fortification. So time out and on to some more technical section. For instance, on page 23 we find a list of various hand holds. This is correct though it omits some common forms as the "shoulder hold" of the Yugoslav kolo. Chapter III raises high expectations for the Development of Step. It begins auspiciously with fifteen ways of performing the basic kolo step, then appropriately shows the relation of popular steps as the polka to this basic step. Suddenly this rich subject is dropped and Augmented Seconds and Chained Thirds are tossed about. After a nonsensical summary of climactic effects (which are vital but not in Miss Lawson's way), we come upon a spectacular map of Some Movements of the Various Peoples from 1 A. D. to 1000 A. D. This is a splendid idea and it has been carried out, we see under Acknowledgments, by G. S. Holland, of the Royal Geographical Society. When we see that the Magyars got stuck two centuries too soon on the eastern border of present Rumania, it seems high time to call in expert advice. Such an expert is on hand in the person of Hans Kurath, who takes one look and in the course of five minutes re-routes the Peoples.

After this we patiently cast about for occasional substantiated facts and try to ignore mis-statements and wild theories. Our search is rewarded. The latter chapters of the book bristle with colorful details, from the ancient lake-dwellers which "ethnologists" discovered as a distinct physical type (113), to a quotation from a pamphlet by Christopher Featherstone (163). These are completely innocent of any sort of notes or references. The historical events are however related to the dance forms and that is something.

To make up for our tribulations, we encounter some little-known dances from the Middle East, a fine collection of better-known Slavic dances, some very well-known Scandinavian steps, etc. These all provide enjoyable and instructive reading, despite an occasional slip and despite affectations of style, such as "mouth music" for "song" and despite a heavy dose of ballet terms. One could wish for diagrams, which would contribute greatly to the clarification of patterns and which would contribute to ethnological comparisons. For instance, they would show graphically the historical layers of the eclectic Krakoviak. However, the clear layout and the delightful pin-men make up for this deficiency. Apparently these choreographies have the commendable source of personal observation. At least, one gathers this from an ambiguous remark on page viii.

In a conciliatory frame of mind, we can forgive the gaps in the appendices, such as absence of Germany and Austria for "Morisco" and the negation of modern French folk-music inspired composers, save Vincent d'Indy. Dance teachers don't have to know about Milhaud and Poulenc. Also, the curious bibliographical selection can be a matter of personal taste.

Perhaps we have been unfair to Miss Lawson? After all, she repeatedly apologizes for forced incompleteness and can be excused on these grounds. She explicitly states her preference for dances within her experience and thus has ample justification for her emphasis on recreational dances. By many tokens she is associated with ballet dancers, has compiled the book largely for such professionals, and may hence be entitled to flights of fancy.

Is she? Are we just spoiled by the pedantry of American folkloric methods? Are we just old biddies, out to find fault instead of extending the hand of international friendship? With this point of view the book deserves a re-reading and receives one. For much hinges on its contents. It is not the struggle of a pioneer against overwhelming odds of prejudice and pennilessness. On the contrary, it is the culmination of half a century of England's growing enthusiasm and understanding; it is backed by a host of societies and collaborators; it is going to represent to a new generation the last word in authoritativeness and scholarliness, of authenticity and sound methodology. With this prospect it can be regarded as nothing short of insidious. True, only the first chapter has gone completely astray, and the last chapters contain sound materials. But the Romantic outlook threads through even the soundest chapters. Even if dance students will swallow all this, ethnologists and folklorists, on the verge of conversion to dance research, will flee in dismay.

The only hope is a complete revision for future editions, deletion of questionable theories with the help of specialists, substantiation of all statements, full acknowledging of references, filling in of gaps, and, if possible, some diagrams. Then we may have the great book on European Dance.

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Gertrude P. Kurath

A NEW YIDDISH FOLKLORE JOURNAL

Yidisher Folklor. A Journal of Jewish Folklore, issued by the Y. L. Cahan Folklore Club of the Yiddish Scientific Institute—*Yivo*. No. I (January 1954). 24 pp.

The folklore club named after the outstanding Jewish folklorist Y. L. Cahan (see *MF*, II, 269) has undertaken a journal devoted to publishing new material in all genres of Yiddish folklore. (This reviewer suggests that Yiddish replace "Jewish" on the English cover and in the statement of aims, p. 24.) *Yidisher Folklor* will be the fourth journal at present devoted exclusively to this field, the Swiss *Beiträge zur Geschichte und Volkskunde der Juden in der Schweiz*, and the Israeli publications *Reshumot* and *Yeda-Am* (whose important recent articles on Yiddish folklore are not listed in *Yidisher Folklor's* "Bibliographical Notes"). We hope this new journal will continue the scientific tradition in folklore of *Yivo*, started over a quarter of a century ago in its Vilna center.

For the convenience of the non-Yiddish scholar and folklorist the last page of *YF* consists of an appended English summary, but this is unfortunately limited merely to the titles. This is hardly helpful, as, for example, the translation of a tale-heading "Two Brothers in Search of the Emperor's Daughter" is misleading, as it may be erroneously connected with Tale-Type (AT) 303, whereas the heroes are not brothers but friends, a victorious fisher-son and a treacherous prince, and the tale itself is a confusion of AT 506, 530, 300 VI and 850 II (motif H 315).

The published material represents the following genres of Yiddish folklore:

Eleven *folksongs*, mostly from Eastern Europe, collected both in the Old and New Worlds. Interesting are three versions of "Titanic" song, one (from Warsaw, Poland) dating back to 1913. American influence is probable upon the first version, containing the phrases "Great was God's grief," "They cried: Dear Lord . . . but the dear Lord did not listen," etc. Excellent comparative notes to Yiddish parallels accompany each song. It is evident that the folksong is still the genre most cultivated by Yiddish folklorists.

American-Jewish children's games, beliefs, and customs include euphemisms for Christian expressions and actions and English usage of Jewish names. Three *paper cutouts* from Eastern Galicia, used as Pentecost festival decorations, are given; Ukrainian influence is recognizable in these.

Two *folktales*, collected in Poland before World War II, are most interesting. The end of the first tale corresponds with a well-known Gypsy and Slavic tale (cf. R. Köhler, *Kleinere Schriften*, I [1898], 428; J. Krzyzanowski, *Polska Bajka Ludowa* [Warsaw, 1947], vol. II, No. 621 II). The second tale is a King Solomon story based on motif T 381.

Six *jests* deal chiefly with professions. *Nicknames for towns and their inhabitants* were very common in Eastern European Jewish folklore; cf. *Yeda-Am* X (1953, 1022 ff., and XI, 58f. *Popular beliefs and superstitions* from Podolia include stepping on horse dung (prolongs pregnancy), and divination by watching a match burn.

The *folk play* on the theme of Moses' death contains several Agadic motifs. I doubt that it is a genuine Purim play, as the editors indicate; it might have been performed a week before Purim, around the 7th of Adar, the day of Moses' birth and death.

The *Bibliographical Notes* should become an important feature of the journal. The eight included in the first issue mention four books (two Yiddish, two English) and four articles (two Yiddish, one Hebrew, one English), and represent a period of three years. When compared to the numerous Yiddish folklore activities and publications listed in any pre-1940 volume of *Volkskundliche Bibliographie* such sparsity is rather depressing. On the other hand, many important Yiddish folklore items and texts in Hebrew publications are not included. I here list those from *Yeda-Am* in 1953, all of which have full original Yiddish texts and Hebrew translations:

I. Berman, "An Anti-Hassidic Lampoon"; S. Einhorn, "Yiddish Proverbs"; M. Grunwald, "Regulations of the Communities Altona, Hamburg and Wandsbeck, 1715"; F. Gugenheim-Gruenberg, "Jewish Versions of the Children's Song *Ryti Rōsli*"; Y. T. Lewinsky, "A Yiddish Version of a Pentecost Folksong on the Betrothal of Israel and the Tora"; D. Persky, "A Yiddish Wedding Folksong from the Skudy Badkhn"; S. Rashkovsky, "Four Yiddish Folksongs from Rumania"; D. Sedan, "A Folktale of a Rabbi and his Wife"; Ch. Sheskin, "A Folksong about a Martyr from Pinsk"; Sh. Tal, "Folklore in Dutch Yiddish." The above list could be multiplied four times, if all articles dealing with aspects of Yiddish folklore (though not presenting new and full Yiddish texts) were included.

There seems to be no scientific cooperation between the New York *Yivo* and the Israel Folklore Society, which is very regrettable. The waste or unnecessary duplication of time, money, and energy spent on parallel projects in the same scholarly discipline must in itself lead to the lowering of scientific standards, which either of the two centers undoubtedly deplore.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

Southern Literary Culture: A Bibliography of Masters' and Doctors' Theses. By Clyde H. Cantrell and W. R. Patrick. (University, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 1955.) 126 pp. \$3.00.

American Folklore: A Bibliography. Compiled by Marguerite Cooley and Vernon Parks, revised by Juanita C. Jackson. (Nashville: George Peabody College for Teachers [Department of English], 1954.) 51 pp. No price listed.

Southern Literary Culture, a bibliography of over 2500 masters' and doctors' theses in 150 graduate schools all over the country, is a reference work of special interest to readers of this journal. Folklore is one of the five chief subjects with which Messrs. Cantrell and Patrick of the Alabama Polytechnic Institute, working at the behest of a South Atlantic Modern Language Association committee, have concerned themselves. (The others are bibliographies, individual authors, language, and cultural history.) Their compilation is necessarily the product of a committee of correspondence despite whose generous cooperation there are bound to be lacunae, although the departments queried included all those "in the humanities, social sciences, and professional areas where we could reasonably expect to find appropriate titles." The terminal date for this check-list is 1948; it is to be hoped that supplements will bring and keep the listings current.

The arrangement of items is alphabetical by authors of theses, with a full index conforming to the subject-listings of the Library of Congress to make finding desired titles easy. Subject headings are further broken down by state and county. Some totals under the more obvious headings likely to be consulted by readers of *MF* suggests the scope of the bibliography. There are 32 theses on ballads, 43 on folk songs, 21 more listed under Negro songs and spirituals; 59 titles appear under folklore, 17 under legends (and three others are listed separately under Indians). Other categories include dancing (folk and national), 5 theses; superstitions, 4; singing games, 3. There are many linguistic theses of folkloristic interest: 18 on Southern place names, 79 on dialects (listed under English) plus still others given under Negro-American, Gullah, Creole, French, and Spanish.

Theses on individual authors of course include studies on the fictional and poetic uses of Southern folkways. A spot check of, for instance, the 73 titles in which Joel Chandler Harris is discussed revealed at least five on the folklore content and five more on the dialect of the Uncle Remus stories. (Several thesis titles are so general as not to suggest whether these special approaches are used.) This bibliography will be most useful to all investigators of Southern folklore and its influence upon the literature of the region. Aiming at completeness, it cannot provide any evaluation of the studies listed. Many theses of course are merely academic calisthenics, yet among those listed here are sure to be worthwhile studies providing valuable leads and materials which would escape the most diligent individual search but for the labors of Messrs. Cantrell and Patrick.

The Cooley, Parks, and Jackson pamphlet is a finding-list for books on folklore in the Joint University Library, Nashville, and in the Peabody College and the Peabody Music Libraries. Dewey call numbers are given, and all books are arranged under three general headings, "American Folk Arts," "American Folk Music," and "American Folklore," each of which is subdivided geographically. One's only criticism of so comprehensive a listing is the indiscriminateness—perhaps necessitous to all library classification—with which genuine folklore collections and studies are jumbled together under general headings with vapid popularizations, literary adaptations, and subliterate distortions of folk materials. Be that as it may, this Nashville *Bibliography* will prove as valuable as the discretion of its users permits. Similar projects in other bibliographical centers would greatly simplify the tracking-down of desired research materials.

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FOLKSONG

Lithuanian Narrative Folksongs. By Jonas Balys. (A *Treasury of Lithuanian Folklore, IV*: Chicago: Draugas Press, 1954.) 144 pp. \$3.50.

The study by competent scholars of non-English language folklore in America is very sparse; yet nothing is more necessary if we are to understand the development of American folklore, the great grandchild of mixed ancestry which has become thoroughly naturalized—just as have the third and fourth generations descended from emigrants who carried this folklore to America

from all over the world. Among the few competent students of this root material is, however, Dr. Jonas Balys, whose various studies of Lithuanian folklore, both as it appears in its home and as it appears in America, have contributed significantly to our understanding of the Baltic peoples.

Dr. Balys' monograph entitled *Lithuanian Narrative Folksongs* is a study of Lithuanian song as it appears among Lithuanians wherever they may be. Not a book of folksong texts nor yet of folksong melodies (that book is forthcoming, at least insofar as the texts and tunes of American variants are concerned), Dr. Balys instead presents here a prose summary of each song and includes for good measure a general introduction and a bibliography. His book is thus pointed toward the folksong specialist who is aware of the problems of folksong scholarship and is more than a little reminiscent of Leiv Heggstad's and H. Grüner-Nielsen's *Utsyn pver gamall norsk Folkevised-ikting*.

Like this survey of Norwegian balladry, which apparently escaped Dr. Balys' notice, *Lithuanian Narrative Folksongs* is arranged according to the subject matter of each song. In speaking of this arrangement, Dr. Balys says:

My purpose was to find out which types of narrative folksongs are familiar among the Lithuanians, how many variants are known, and where they are printed or in MSS, but still available Another purpose was to place the types dealing with the same region of human life as close together as possible. [p.22]

To one only slightly acquainted with the folksongs of the Baltic peoples, it seems most probable that Dr. Balys achieved his first purpose. Over 270 songs are described, and after each description there is printed an abbreviated list of sources. When this number of songs is compared with the 195 described in Heggstad and Nielsen's volume, it is especially notable, for the population of Norway outnumbers that of Lithuania by approximately one-third. It should also be noted that Dr. Balys was equally as strict as, if not more strict than, Heggstad and Nielsen in insisting upon the narrative content of his songs. In brief, this is apparently a comprehensive survey.

His second purpose, the classification according to theme, will lead, perhaps, to some argument; and this Dr. Balys realizes: "The most important part of this work," he says, "is neither the classification which can always be modified or improved, nor the general outlook, because new facts and insights can lead to new conclusions." Indeed, any classification is difficult, and a classification by theme is bound to lead to disagreement in particular instances. Another person writing this book (though it is difficult to imagine another person who could have) would undoubtedly put many songs in different places from those to which Dr. Balys has assigned them, but such a change would probably neither improve nor hurt the book. Moreover, although Dr. Balys' twelve major themes—to each of which he assigns a letter of the alphabet—are not mutually exclusive, it is difficult to develop a system of themes which would be. Certainly no scholar yet has been able to develop such a system, though both Grundtvig and Child attempted to do so.

One final comment should be made about the arrangement of the songs: two types of subdivision are employed. Subtypes of songs are indicated by a decimal number—thus A 22.2 is a subtype of A 22.1, etc. Songs of closely parallel themes are assigned additional letters—thus A 60a and A 60b both deal with a lover scorned. It is with these subdivisions of both types that

one must argue most freely, for frequently it is difficult to see from the prose summaries exactly why Dr. Balys chose to call one song a subtype, another a song of parallel theme; indeed, in many instances it is difficult to see any parallelism at all. But this may be the fault of the prose summaries rather than of the overall classification system.

These are, of course, but quibbles and do not seriously detract from the value of the book which could well serve as a model for similar books about the folksongs of all countries.

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Midwest Folklore

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